

Missouri Department of Conservation

Public Input Summary

for the proposed blue catfish regulation change

on Truman Lake and Lake of the Ozarks



January 11, 2013

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Executive Summary

- Many catfish anglers and Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) staff have concerns about the declining quality of blue catfish at Truman Reservoir and Lake Ozark.
- In the 2002 Statewide Catfish Angler Survey, the majority of the respondents indicated the quality of catfishing at Truman Reservoir had declined over the last 10 years.
- In 2003 MDC (with public input) finalized the Statewide Catfish Management Plan. One objective outlined in the plan is: *Implement new regulations, based on sampling and creel data to protect large catfishes in Truman Reservoir and Lake of the Ozarks.*
<http://mdc.mdc.mo.gov/node/6197>.
- MDC documented high harvest and slow growth of blue catfish at Truman Reservoir during the Reservoir Catfish Evaluation (2003-08). Slow growth has also been documented at Lake of the Ozarks.
- MDC convened a working group in 2009 to summarize past catfish management at Truman Reservoir and Lake of the Ozarks and to develop future management objectives.
- Three open houses were conducted in May of 2010 to present information and to gather public input pertaining to the management of blue catfish in Truman and Lake of the Ozarks. The majority of attendees favored implementing regulations that would protect blue catfish from overharvest and increase the number of larger fish.
- Input received during the 2010 open houses was considered and modifications were made to MDC's management recommendations. Updated information, including two years of preliminary baseline sampling data, and modified recommendations were presented again at three open houses which were conducted in August 2012. Additional public input was collected at these events, along with the ongoing collection of online comments at mdc.mo.gov/node/18097.
- A total of 190 people participated in the 2012 open houses that were held in Camdenton, Clinton and Warsaw. Eighty-three (83) comments were received at the open houses and 241 comments have been received online (the web comment period closed on 24 December 2012). There is strong support for the proposed regulation from the comments that have been received.
- Common themes heard at the open houses include:
 - The proposed regulation is too liberal; comments included keeping 5 under and 1 over the slot limit and would like the regulation to be statewide.

- People were very concerned about jug lines, limb lines, stainless steel hooks, trophy fishing and moving large fish to pay lakes.
 - Several comments were against the slot limit itself feeling that was the size fish they catch, people will stop fishing because it will cost too much in bait and fuel, people did not want to measure fish and the perception that slot limits are difficult for Conservation Agents to enforce.
 - Enforcement comments included not being able to enforce laws we have now, the proposed regulation will not work if it cannot be enforced, there is a strong need for additional Conservation Agents on the water
 - The status quo group does not want any changes to the regulation because they do not believe there is a problem with a declining population or quality in the fishery. Concern was also expressed by people who believe the fish in the slot are the ones they are catching and they will not be able to feed their family and supply fish for family and church fish fries.
- If a regulation is proposed, it will go to the MDC Regulations Committee for review. With the approval of the Regulations Committee and Director, the proposed regulation changes would then be presented to the Conservation Commission for approval. If approved by the Commission, the regulation changes would then be filed with the Secretary of State's Office and posted for public comment. Pending comments, the new regulation would then take effect the following March 1.
 - A three-year baseline population monitoring project was completed by MDC staff on both reservoirs in the fall of 2012. Provisional results on both waters indicate blue catfish populations with high numbers of smaller fish, few fish within the proposed protected slot-length limit and very few fish above the proposed slot-length limit. The table below includes provisional sampling results for blue catfish collected at both reservoirs specific to the MDC preferred regulation option.

	Average Total			
	Length (inches)	< 26 inches	26-34 inches	≥ 34 inches
Truman Lake	22.8	82%	16%	2%
Lake of the Ozarks	21.4	83%	15%	2%

Proposed Regulation Options
Daily Limit - 10 blue catfish daily
The 3 protected slot-length limit options being considered are:
24-32 inches (about 5-13 lbs.)
25-33 inches (about 6-15 lbs.)
26-34 inches (about 7-16 lbs.)
1 or 2 blue catfish in the daily limit above the protected slot
Possession Limit (10) – Twice the **Statewide** Daily Limit

At this time, the MDC preferred option is 10 blue catfish daily, a 26 – 34 inch protected slot-length limit, and 2 blue catfish in the daily limit above the protected slot.

This regulation would affect **Truman Lake** and **Lake of the Ozarks**, and **their tributaries**, including the **No-boating zone below Truman Dam in Lake of the Ozarks**.

The **No-Boating Zone** is presently managed under a special regulation which limits harvest to four catfish in the aggregate daily with only one fish over 24 inches. Should the proposed regulation be enacted, flathead and channel catfish regulations in the no-boating zone will revert to current Statewide Regulations for daily and possession limits

**Five (5) flathead catfish daily, Ten (10) channel catfish daily,
Possession Limit – Twice the Statewide Daily Limit**

Regulation Proposal Objectives:

- 1) Protect medium-size blue catfish and increase the number of larger blue catfish.**
- 2) Increase harvest of smaller blue catfish below the protected slot with the goal of improving growth across the population.**
- 3) Retain catfish angler base on all waters affected.**
- 4) Maintain good relations with all stakeholders, while continuing to promote local catfish-based economy.**
- 5) Provide a sustainable, quality, blue catfish fishery for present and future generations to enjoy.**

Introduction

Based on public comments, MDC staff observations, and subsequent research by Resource Science and Fisheries Division staff, the Missouri Department of Conservation is proposing changes to existing fishing regulations to provide more and larger blue catfish for anglers on Truman Reservoir and Lake of the Ozarks.

MDC staff began hearing concerns in the early 1990s from anglers and conservation agents about the declining number of large blue catfish in Truman Reservoir and these concerns continue today. More recently, these same concerns have been heard regarding Lake of the Ozarks.

Information obtained to date indicates that there are large numbers of smaller blue catfish in both reservoirs, but that high harvest rates of blue catfish 19 inches and larger are limiting the number of fish allowed to reach larger sizes. These harvest rates are too high to maintain a quality fishery. As a result, there has been a long term decline in the number of larger blue catfish in both reservoirs.

Blue catfish can live up to 30 years and are the largest catfish in Missouri, capable of reaching sizes in excess of 100 pounds. The former world and current Missouri state record blue catfish was caught in 2010 and weighed 130 pounds.

The average size blue catfish caught by anglers and MDC staff is 22 inches (~4 pounds) on Truman Lake and 21 inches (~3 pounds) on Lake of the Ozarks.

For slow-growing fish such as blue catfish, once a decline occurs, it could take at least eight years to start reversing the trend and rebuilding the population size structure.

Catfish anglers, as a group, are quite diverse. On one end of the spectrum are anglers who are harvest oriented, while at the other end are anglers whose primary goal is to catch, photograph, and release the fish of a lifetime. This regulation proposal has been developed to accommodate the needs of this diverse group. The primary objectives of the proposed regulation are as follows:

1. Protect medium-size blue catfish and increase the number of larger blue catfish, yet allow limited harvest of fish above the slot.
- 2) Increase the harvest of blue catfish below the protected slot by doubling the daily limit with the goals of improving growth across the population and to accommodate harvest oriented anglers.
- 3) Retain catfish angler base on all waters affected.
- 4) Maintain good relations with all stakeholders, while continuing to promote the local catfish-based economy.
- 5) Provide a sustainable, quality, blue catfish fishery for present and future generations to enjoy.

Population modeling predicts a significant increase in the numbers of larger fish would occur under the protected slot-length limit regulations being considered. In addition, we predict that

the number of fish harvested would remain similar to, or increase compared to existing conditions.

MDC staff completed three (3) consecutive years of baseline blue catfish population sampling on both reservoirs in the fall of 2012 which documented current population characteristics and growth rates. If the regulation change is approved, MDC will conduct one year of sampling four to five (4-5) years post-regulation to assess developing trend data and additional sampling beginning eight (8) years post-regulation when population level changes should become more evident. The results of the post-regulation sampling will allow MDC to determine if the regulation is producing the desired results and to make adjustments if needed.

Strategic Goals

1. Improve quality of blue-catfish fishing on Truman Reservoir and Lake of the Ozarks.
2. Increase number of larger blue catfish on Truman Reservoir and Lake of the Ozarks.
3. Maintain/increase number of catfish anglers on Truman Reservoir and Lake of the Ozarks.
4. Maintain/increase the number of catfish on Truman Reservoir and Lake of the Ozarks that anglers may catch and keep.

Communications Objectives

Short-term communications will focus on promoting both the regulations changes being considered and related supporting information, and gathering public input (Open houses and on-line comments). Long-term communications will focus on further promoting the regulation changes, relaying future population monitoring results, and continuing to monitor public opinion through our online comment form.

1. Inform anglers and other stakeholders that the problem of declining numbers of large blue catfish on Truman and Lake Ozark is serious and will continue to reduce the quality of fishing on these waters unless protective regulations are implemented.
2. Communicate to anglers and other stakeholders that the proposed regulation change is a well-designed, science- and opinion-based solution to this decline and will benefit both anglers and blue catfish populations.
3. Continue to engage anglers in the regulation process. Emphasize that blue catfish within the protected slot length would still be available to catch and release.

Talking Points

Conservation makes Missouri a great place to fish, and catfishing is very popular.

- According to the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, catfish are the number-one sought-after sport fish in Missouri.
- Anglers spend more time fishing for catfish in Missouri than any other sport fish.
- Catfish provide many anglers enjoyment and fish to eat.

- MDC wants to make sure this tradition continues.

Public input has been and will continue to be a very important part of the solution

- When volunteer catfish anglers participating in a creel survey were asked to rate their Truman catfishing trips from 2003-2005, 41% rated them as poor.
 - In MDC's 2002 Statewide Catfish Angler Survey, about 35 percent of respondents indicated the quality of catfishing had declined over the last 10 years, while about 12 percent of respondents indicated catfishing had improved. About 28 percent reported that catfishing quality had stayed the same, and about 25 percent reported they didn't know.

Timeframe and process of the proposed changes

- Pending Fisheries Division approval, draft regulation changes would be proposed to the Regulations Committee in early 2013. If approved by MDC's Regulations Committee, regulations will then have to be approved by MDC's Director and the Conservation Commission.

Regulations changes to the *Missouri Wildlife Code* follow a standard process that is science-based and includes public comment.

- The process for making regulations changes begins with evaluating the science-based needs for the changes and obtaining initial comments from the public. If a regulation is proposed, it is presented to the MDC Regulations Committee for consideration, including a thorough review of available data and public comment. Once a proposal for a regulation change is approved by the Regulations Committee, the Director of MDC must approve it. Upon Director approval, the proposal is presented to the Conservation Commission for consideration. If approved by the Conservation Commission, the regulation change is then filed with the Secretary of State's Office for public comment. After consideration of public comment, the regulation may then become a part of the *Wildlife Code of Missouri*.

Open Houses 2012

Blue Catfish Management Open House Timeline

- April 16 – Meeting Rooms Reserved in Clinton, Camdenton, and Warsaw
- May 1 – Station Content Drafted: stations, station staff, content, key messages
- May 16 – Draft of Open House Information to Michele Baumer and Division Chiefs
- June 5 – Present Open House Plan to Regulations Committee
- June – Work with Michele Baumer and O&E to Develop Posters, Handouts, etc.
- June – Begin First Round of Publicizing Open Houses (see appendix 2)
- July 1 – Send Letters to Key Audiences and Post Flyers at Local Marinas, etc. (see appendix 1)
- August 1 - Begin Second Round of Publicizing Open Houses (see appendix 2)
- August 21, 23, and 25 – Open Houses are Held
 - ✓ Camdenton, August 21st, 5:00 – 8:00, Camdenton Fire Station Conference Room
 - ✓ Clinton, August 23rd, 5:00- 8:00, First Baptist Church Gymnasium
 - ✓ Warsaw, August 25th, 1:00 – 4:00, Benton County EMS Station Conference Room
- October 1 – Open House Summaries Drafted
- November 9, 2012 – Present Open House Summary to Regulations Committee

Open House Stations

Station 1-Welcome




KEY MESSAGES – WELCOME TABLE


- Greet people as they come into the room
- Orient participants
- Give them a comment card (see appendix 3)
- Give them a meeting handout (see appendix 4)

Station 2-Blue Catfish Facts

Blue Catfish Facts



- More anglers spend more time fishing for catfish in Missouri than any other sport fish.
- Blue catfish are slow growing and can live up to 30 years.
- Blue catfish are the largest catfish species in Missouri and can exceed 100 pounds.
- Both Truman Reservoir and Lake of the Ozarks have abundant blue catfish under seven pounds available for anglers to harvest.




KEY MESSAGES – BLUE CATFISH FACTS


- More anglers spend more time fishing for catfish in Missouri than any other sport fish
- Blue catfish are slow growing and can live up to 30 years
- Blue catfish are the largest catfish species in Missouri and can exceed 100 pounds
- Both reservoirs have abundant blue catfish under 7 pounds available for anglers to harvest
- A recent study in Oklahoma found that mortality of released blue catfish caught on jug lines was low

Station 3-The Issue

The Issue



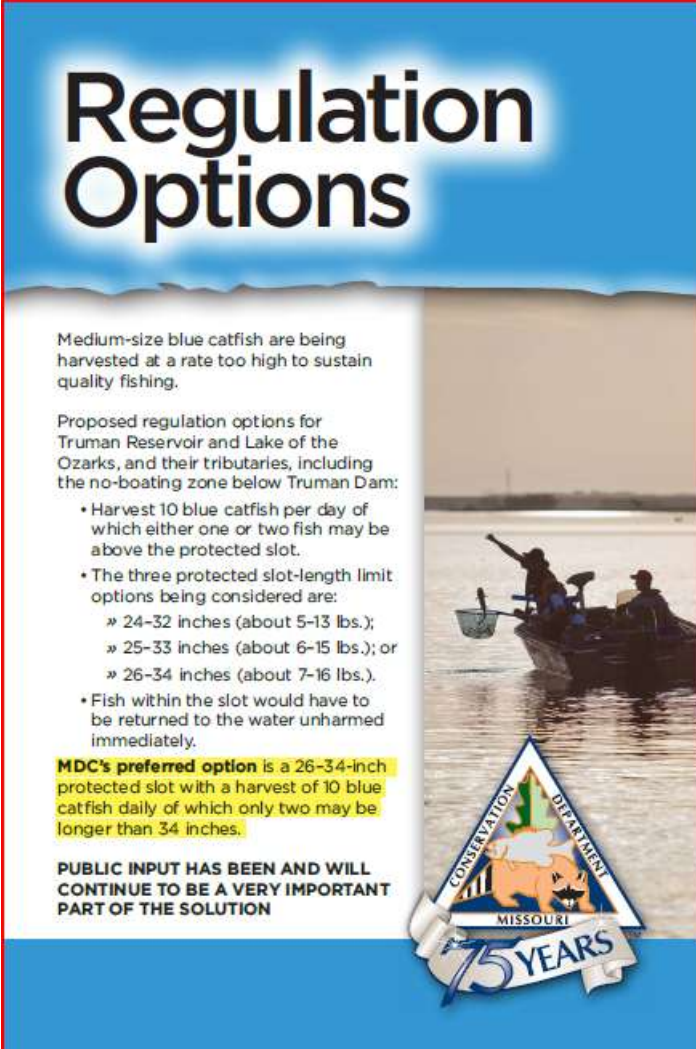
- Beginning in the early 1990s, input from anglers and MDC staff raised concern about the declining number of large blue catfish in Truman Reservoir and Lake of the Ozarks.
- Of catfish anglers surveyed in 2002, the highest percentage stated catfishing had declined in Truman Reservoir during the previous 10 years.
- Of 308 volunteer catfish anglers, the largest percentage of respondents (41%) ranked their trips poor while the smallest percentage of respondents (15%) ranked their trips excellent.
- Numbers of larger blue catfish in Truman Reservoir and Lake of the Ozarks have declined.
- A study at Truman Reservoir found very high harvest of blue catfish 24 inches and larger.



KEY MESSAGES – THE ISSUE

- Beginning in the early 1990s, input from anglers and MDC staff raised concern about the declining number of large blue catfish in both reservoirs
- Of catfish anglers surveyed in 2002, the highest percentage stated catfishing had declined in Truman Reservoir during the previous 10 years
- Of 308 volunteer catfish anglers, the largest percentage of respondents (41%) ranked their trips poor while the smallest percentage of respondents (15%) ranked their trips excellent
- Numbers of larger blue catfish in Truman Reservoir and Lake of the Ozarks have declined
- A study at Truman Reservoir found very high harvest of blue catfish 24 inches and larger

Station 4-Regulations Options, including the preferred option



Regulation Options

Medium-size blue catfish are being harvested at a rate too high to sustain quality fishing.

Proposed regulation options for Truman Reservoir and Lake of the Ozarks, and their tributaries, including the no-boating zone below Truman Dam:

- Harvest 10 blue catfish per day of which either one or two fish may be above the protected slot.
- The three protected slot-length limit options being considered are:
 - » 24-32 inches (about 5-13 lbs.);
 - » 25-33 inches (about 6-15 lbs.); or
 - » 26-34 inches (about 7-16 lbs.).
- Fish within the slot would have to be returned to the water unharmed immediately.

MDC's preferred option is a 26-34-inch protected slot with a harvest of 10 blue catfish daily of which only two may be longer than 34 inches.

PUBLIC INPUT HAS BEEN AND WILL CONTINUE TO BE A VERY IMPORTANT PART OF THE SOLUTION

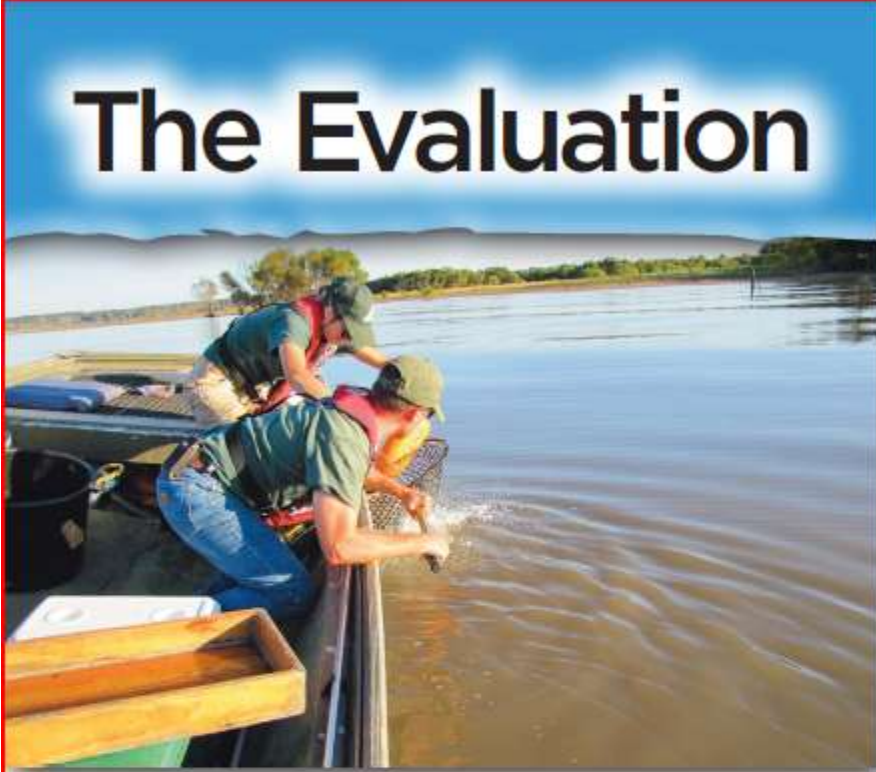
MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION 75 YEARS

KEY MESSAGES – REGULATION OPTIONS


- Medium-size blue catfish are being harvested at a rate too high to sustain quality fishing
- **PROPOSED REGULATION OPTIONS** for Truman Reservoir and Lake of the Ozarks, and their tributaries, including the no-boating zone below Truman Dam
 - 10 blue catfish per day of which either 1 or 2 fish may be above the protected slot
 - The 3 protected slot-length limit options being considered are:
 - 24-32 inches (about 5 - 13 lbs.)
 - 25-33 inches (about 6 - 15 lbs.)
 - 26- 34 inches (about 7 – 16 lbs.)
 - Fish within the slot would have to be returned to the water unharmed immediately
- **MDC PREFERRED OPTION** is a 26- 34 inch protected slot. Ten (10) blue catfish daily of which only 2 may be longer than 34 inches.
- **PUBLIC INPUT HAS BEEN AND WILL CONTINUE TO BE A VERY IMPORTANT PART OF THE SOLUTION**

Station 5-The Evaluation

The Evaluation



- Blue catfish populations at both reservoirs are currently being sampled using jug lines.
- A recent study in Oklahoma found that mortality of released blue catfish caught on jug lines was low.
- Any regulation put in place will be evaluated no sooner than eight years later to document changes to these blue catfish populations.
- If regulations aren't having the projected results, MDC will make adjustments as necessary.
- Public comments will be collected throughout this evaluation.



KEY MESSAGES – THE EVALUATION

- Blue catfish populations at both reservoirs are currently being sampled using jug lines
- Any regulation put in place will be evaluated no sooner than 8 years later to document changes to these blue catfish populations
- If regulations aren't having the projected results, MDC will make adjustments as necessary
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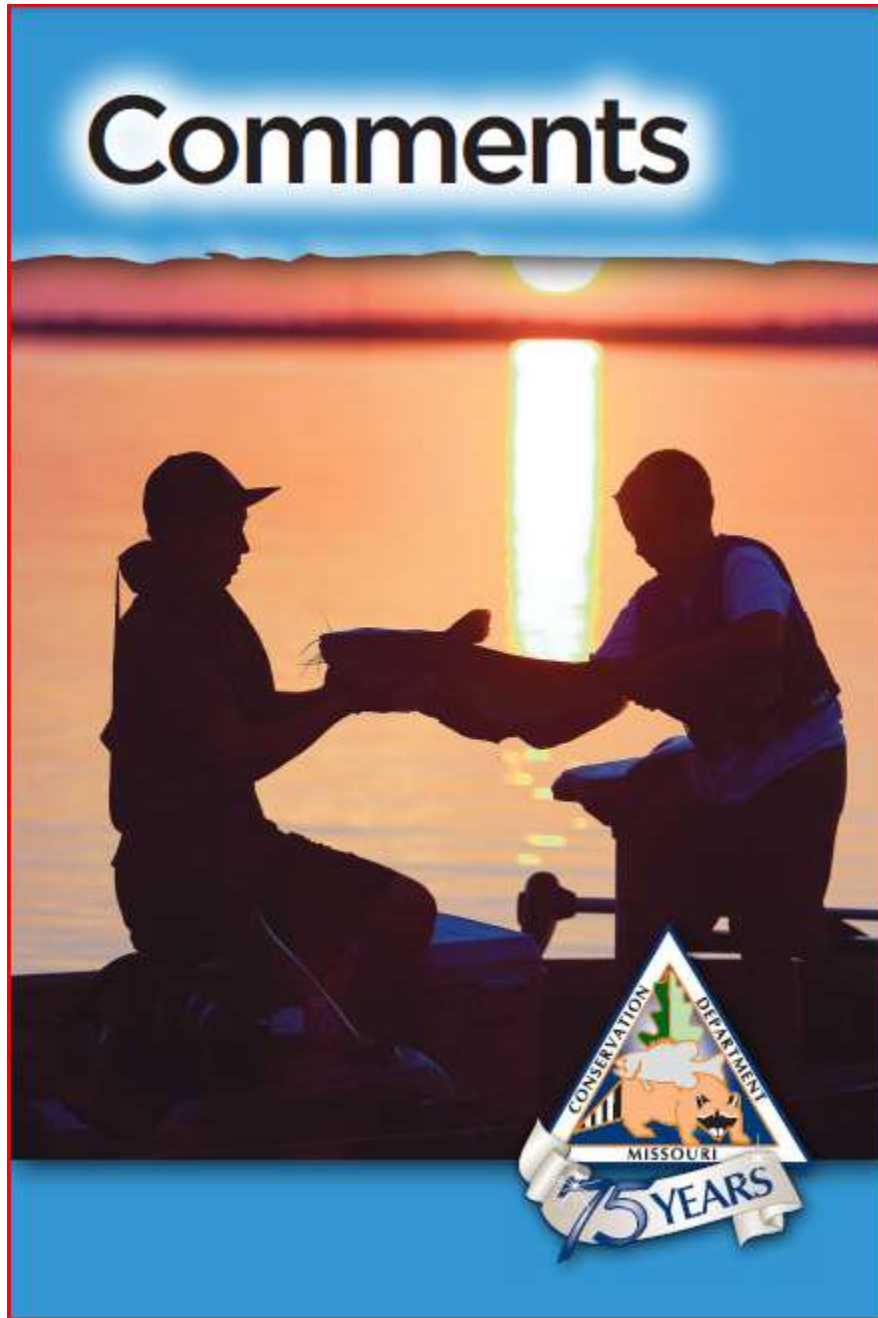
Station 6-Looping Video



KEY MESSAGES – THE LOOPING VIDEO

- Participants can watch the blue catfish video produced by O&E
- Participants can fill out their comment cards

Station 7-Comments



KEY MESSAGES – COMMENT CARD TABLE

- Comment cards are collected
- Participants were asked if they got their questions answered
- People were thanked for participating in the open house and giving us their comments

Open House Summaries

Camdenton-August 21, 2012 at the Mid-County Fire Protection Building from 5-8:00 p.m.

At Camdenton 23 people attended and 21 folks filled out the questionnaire. There was a lot of opportunity to share with people the reasoning behind the proposed regulation change, and folks were receptive.

The people who attended the Camdenton meeting looked like this:

- All were anglers
- All fished for blue catfish
- Most who answered this question used jug lines
- As expected, most fished at Lake of the Ozarks, but 3 people also fished the Mississippi and/or Missouri rivers
- Most heard about the open houses from a friend followed by a newspaper article. Three people mentioned *The Conservationist* magazine and one person read about the open houses on Facebook
- People traveled from 6 miles to 150 miles one way to attend the meeting with most traveling 10-20 miles to visit

We received 16 comments which ranged the entire gamut of “leave things as they are” to “cut down all jug lines” to “let the science of your findings drive your regulations, not the politics”. For the most part the comments were positive and very respectful. Several people thanked us for having the open houses and allowing them to ask questions and make comments. We did not hear any new themes or ideas at this open house.

We did not have any legislators attend this open house.

The displays with the stringer of catfish and the former world record blue catfish were not only impressive but really helped people take home the message of how this proposed regulation will improve their angling success.

Clinton-August 23 from 5-8:00 p.m. at the First Baptist Church

At the Clinton open house 100 people attended and 66 people filled out the questionnaire. The folks from Missouri Outback radio show were there asking lots of questions and taking lots of pictures of the displays and the staff working the event. The open houses were promoted on their radio show that morning. At the Clinton Open House everyone was polite and cordial.

The people who attended the Clinton meeting and answered the questions looked like this:

- All were anglers
- Everybody fished for blue catfish except for one
- The preferred method of fishing for blue cat was rod/reel
- As expected all of the respondents fished at Truman Reservoir and 27% of them fished on the Missouri River
- People traveled from 1 mile to 100 miles one way to attend the open house with most traveling 18-20 miles to visit

We received 66 comments which as expected were “all over the board” from “people using trot lines and jug lines are hurting the fish numbers.” to “these are not blue cats-they are white cats” to “don’t change anything; you haven’t given the reduced limit (March 2006) time to work yet.” to “there is no problem in Truman Lake with the blue catfishing” and “I trust your research and believe your science to be sound. I personally know the individuals that have been part of the study. They are professional and have both integrity and character”.

No legislators attended this open house.

As with Camdenton, the stringer of blue catfish and the former world record blue catfish were not only impressive but really helped people take home the message of how this proposed regulation will improve angling success. It also helped to dispel the rumor that the proposed regulation will severely restrict angler harvest opportunities.

Warsaw-August 25 from 1-4 p.m. at the Warsaw Lincoln EMS Station

At the Warsaw open house 67 people attended and 48 filled out the questionnaire. As with the other open houses I appreciated the dialogue between the staff and the public. Often the public comes in with a preconceived idea “for” or “against” the regulation only to find out they did not completely understand the proposed regulation change. These open houses allow us to educate the public without the bias that may be in the region. Warsaw brought us visitors from the Common Sense Conservation group.

The people who attended the Warsaw meeting and answered the questions looked like this:

- Forty two of the forty eight people said they were anglers
- Forty five of the forty eight participants fished for blue catfish and three did not consider themselves anglers.
- Rod/reel was the preferred method for catching blue catfish
- As expected, the Saturday meeting had more diversity regarding where they fished: 71% fished Lake of the Ozarks, 81% fished Truman Lake, 13% Missouri River and 4% Mississippi River.
- People traveled from 1 mile to 170 miles one way to attend this open house, with most traveling 11-20 miles to visit.

We received 48 comments and as with the other two open houses we received a variety of comments from “I feel like you’re causing an undue hardship on those of us that travel great distances to catch fish for feeding our families”, to “anything less than 5 pounds needs to be returned to the water. It is a waste to keep fish that you can’t filet” to “I am sad that there is going to be a slot limit, but I think the lower number needs to be larger than 24 inches” to “Great Program!”, to “Great idea. We need to do everything possible to make sure our children and grandchildren have the same advantages that we as ethical fisherman have had in our lifetimes. Great job MDC”

No legislators attended this open house.

As with the other open houses the stringer of blue catfish really helped people see what they would be allowed to keep with the new regulations.

Comment Summaries and Themes from the Open Houses and the Web Page

Comments from the Open Houses

Themes from the Open House and Online Comments:

- **In favor of the proposed regulation**
- **Proposed regulation is too liberal**
- **Status quo/leave things as they are/there is not a problem**
- **Law enforcement issues**
- **Issues other than the proposed regulation/trot and limb lines/bass and catfish tournaments/trophy fishing**
- **Against slot limits**

Camdenton*

We received 16 comments at the Camdenton Open House:

- 5 comments in favor
- 4 comments wanted the status quo
- 3 comments addressed issues other than the proposed regulation
- 2 comments felt the proposed regulation is too liberal
- 1 comment was about law enforcement
- 1 disagreed with the proposed regulation without a reason

In Camdenton the people who left comments were for the most part in favor of the proposed regulation but had concerns the proposed regulation is too liberal and would prefer to only keep 5 fish under the slot and 1 over. Other concerns include the inability of conservation agents to enforce the slot limit they favor. Interestingly, people shared concerns about jug/trot lines and bass/catfish tournaments causing declines in the blue catfish populations. There was also a segment of people who just wanted the regulation left as it currently is because there is not a problem with a declining population or quality in the fishery.

Clinton*

We received 39 comments at the Clinton Open House:

- 17 comments in favor
- 7 comments addressed issues other than the proposed regulation
- 7 comments wanted the status quo
- 4 comments felt the proposed regulation is too liberal
- 3 comments were against the slot limit
- 2 comments were about enforcement of the regulation

Again, there is strong support by the people who attended the open house at Clinton for the proposed change in the regulation, with folks having concerns about wanting jug lines, trot and limb lines limited, and stainless steel hooks outlawed. Concern was expressed for the blue catfish population due to people being allowed to keep 10 fish under and 2 fish over the proposed slot limit with an emphasis being placed on enforcing the laws that are already in place or will be in place. Those not wanting any change, the status quo people, were concerned about not being able to feed their families and supplying fish for family and church fish fries because of the cost of fuel, bait and tackle for so few fish that could be kept, comments were made like “if it ain’t broke don’t fix it”. Those against the slot limit thought slot limits were confusing and do not want to have to measure their fish to know if they can keep it or not.

Warsaw*

We received 28 comments at the Warsaw open house:

- 10 comments were in favor of the proposed regulation
- 7 comments were against slot limits
- 4 comments were concerned about jug fishing and trophy fishing
- 4 comments thought the proposed regulation is too liberal
- 1 regulation comment

Warsaw still had strong support for the proposed regulation but several comments expressed opposition to the slot limits. There were several reasons people were opposed to slot limits including releasing fish within the slot will be too weak to survive, they will not be able to afford to fish because of the cost of bait and fuel and the fish in the slot are the fish anglers are targeting. The anglers who commented at Warsaw were concerned about supporting trophy and tournament fishing. Comments regarding the proposed regulation being too liberal included: “...the limit should consist of 6 fish with only 1 fish being over 36 inches and the rest must be less than 24 inches” another included “limit 5” and the one regulation comment wanted more agents to ticket people who leave their jugs out.

*Not everyone who attended the open houses filled out a comment card.

Online Comments

We received 241 online comments:

- 113 comments in favor of the proposed regulation
- 42 comments believe the proposed regulation is too liberal
- 40 comments were concerned about limiting and regulating jug/trot lines and stainless steel hooks, trophy fishing and transporting large fish to other states
- 20 comments were against slot limits
- 20 regulation comments

- 13 comments wanted to leave regulations as they are because they do not believe there is a problem and other people believe we do not need to be managing for trophy fish

The online comments definitely had a statewide feel and appeal to them with concerned anglers from out of state also making comments. The people who were in favor of the proposed regulation were so passionate about their comment saying things such as "...MDC has gone above and beyond doing background research on this issue" and "...protection for blue catfish is long overdue", but many of the supporters did not want the protection to stop at the lakes but making comments such as "Great start, but this falls way short...statewide regulations are what is needed".

The people who felt the proposed regulation is too liberal agreed with wanting a statewide regulation and desired a stricter regulation to allow only one over the slot limit and five under.

As with the open house comments there is strong concern regarding trot line and jug fishing, but additional concerns were brought up including managing the fishery for trophy hunters and people catching large blue catfish to sell to pay lakes in other states.

Those opposing slot limits had many concerns including not wanting to measure the fish, increasing the daily limit to 10 will destroy the blue catfish we have left, "slot limits on the Big Piney and Gasconade are a nightmare", "...they are difficult for agents to enforce", the slot limit "...are the best eating size...", MDC is "pleasing the trophy fishermen by making a trophy lake", people will stop fishing because of the cost of bait and fuel, there is not a problem with the blue catfish population and slot limits are not needed.

There was strong agreement that more agents were needed to enforce the laws we already have regarding trot lines and jug lines. There was concern the proposed regulation will not work if it is not enforced. Comments were made such as "Hire more conservation agents to cover more water and land to make sure people are doing the right thing...", and "Your proposed regulation will be less effective without better enforcement" and "...favor more inspections of jugs and trotlines".

There were surprisingly few comments from people who felt the population was fine and there is not a problem with blue catfish. A couple of different comments came from the web included: "I feel fishing has been doing nothing but getting better at these lakes!!!", "Why do we need to change the system, so we can have a few trophy fish?" and one person was concerned the proposed regulation would create a trophy catfish lake that would ruin the "great crappie fishing at Truman".

Media

Relevant Links and Outreach Efforts

Proposed Rules Are Best Hope for Blue Catfish (Sedalia Democrat - May 29, 2010)

Decline of Catfish Quality Concerns Anglers (St. Louis Post – (June 20, 2010)

Blue Catfish Management Changes for Truman Reservoir and Lake of the Ozarks (MDC Public Web – June 2010 ongoing)

<http://mdc.mo.gov/fishing/fish-catch/game-fish/catfish/blue-catfish-management-changes-truman-reservoir-and-lake-ozark>

Building Better Blue Cats at Truman Reservoir and Lake Ozark (Missouri Conservationist, News & Events July 2010)

<http://mdc.mo.gov/conmag/2010/07/news-events?page=0,4>

Missouri Fishermen Debate Proposed Rule (Kansas City Star – July 4, 2010)

Blue catfish survey is hands on (All Outdoors – November 18, 2010 ongoing on MDC web)

<http://mdc.mo.gov/newsroom/blue-catfish-survey-hands>

Blue catfish Update (Missouri Conservationist, News & Events April 2011)

<http://mdc.mo.gov/conmag/2011/04/news-events>

Blue catfish study enters second year (All Outdoors – August 29, 2011 ongoing on MDC web)

<http://www.mdc.mo.gov/newsroom/archive/201108>

[Clinton Daily Democrat Article](#)

Radio Interviews

June 14, 2010 - 97.1 the Lake Warsaw

June 24, 2010 – 95.3 KDKD Clinton

August 7, 2010 - 97.1 the Lake Warsaw

August 28, 2010 - 97.1 the Lake Warsaw

October 28, 2010 - 95.3 KDKD Clinton

March 24, 2011 - 97.1 the Lake Warsaw

June 23, 2011 - 95.3 KDKD Clinton

June 28, 2011 – 1450 KOKO Warrensburg

June 30, 2011 – 1050 KSIS Sedalia

July 8, 2011 - 97.1 the Lake Warsaw

October 27, 2011 - 97.1 the Lake Warsaw

February 16, 2012 – 99.9 Warrenton

Appendices

Appendix 1

Open House Invitation Letter

July 25, 2012

Dear Catfish Angling Enthusiast:

The Missouri Department of Conservation will be hosting a series of “Open House Forums” during the month of August. See enclosed. The topic will be proposed blue catfish regulations for Truman Reservoir and Lake of the Ozarks. Research and angler reports indicate numbers of larger blue catfish have declined in both reservoirs. On Truman Reservoir, studies show very high harvest rates for blue catfish 24 inches and larger. The numbers of smaller blue catfish in both reservoirs are adequate.

Proposed regulations being considered include:

- **Increasing the daily limit from 5 to 10** to allow more anglers to take home fish and improve blue catfish growth
- **Implementing a protected slot length-limit** to reduce harvest of medium-sized blue catfish, so more fish reach larger sizes. The 3 protect slot length-limit options being considered are:
 - **24-32 inches (5-13 pounds)**
 - **25-33inches (6-15 pounds)**
 - **26-34 inches (7-16 pounds)**
- **Allowing anglers to keep 1 or 2 fish** above the protected slot

Your input in this process is important. You are invited to attend one of the meetings listed in the enclosure to learn more about the regulations being considered and to make comment. Comments can also be made online at: <http://mdc.mo.gov/fishing/regulations/truman-reservoir-and-lake-ozarks-blue-catfish-management-changes-considered>

For more information contact MDC Public Involvement Coordinator Michele Baumer at 573-522-4115, ext. 3350 or Michele.Baumer@mdc.mo.gov

Sincerely,

Mike Bayless
Fisheries Management Biologist - Truman Reservoir

Enclosure

Appendix 2

Open House Flyer

MDC *Blue Catfish* OPEN HOUSES

MDC is considering protective regulations to improve the quality of blue catfish on **Truman Reservoir and Lake of the Ozarks**. These waters have plenty of small blue catfish, but numbers of larger blues have declined. Protecting medium-size blue catfish will allow more to grow to larger sizes.

Regulation changes being considered include:

- Increase the daily limit from five to 10 blue catfish;
- Add a protected slot-length for medium-size blue catfish; and
- Allow the harvest of one or two blue catfish above the protected slot-length.

Stop by to learn more and share your opinions at three MDC public open-house forums

Camdenton

Mid-County Fire Protection, 184 N. Business Route 5
August 21, 5-8 p.m.

Clinton

First Baptist Church, 209 E. Jefferson Street
August 23, 5-8 p.m.

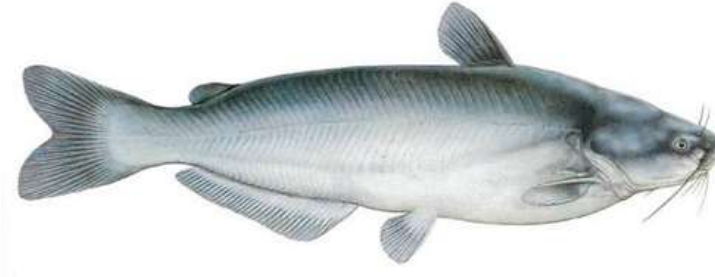
Warsaw

Warsaw Lincoln EMS Station, 1206 Medic Drive
August 25, 1-4 p.m.



For More Information, contact
MDC Public Involvement Coordinator
Michele Baumer at 573-522-4115, ext. 3350
or Michele.Baumer@mdc.mo.gov.

Truman Reservoir and Lake of the Ozarks Proposed Blue Catfish Regulations



Share your thoughts regarding Truman Reservoir and Lake of the Ozarks proposed blue catfish regulations in one of the following ways:

- Write your comments on the back of this card and drop it in the comment box today.
- Share your comments with MDC staff.
- Mail your comments to Missouri Department of Conservation, Mike Bayless, P.O. Box 368, Clinton, MO, 64735
- Post your comments on-line at: mdc.mo.gov/node/18097

[illegible]

Blue Catfish Informational Open House

1. Do you consider yourself an angler?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

2. How often do you typically fish for blue catfish? (check one)

- ☐ More than once a week
☐ About once per week
☐ Two or three times per month
☐ About once per month
☐ A few times per year
☐ Not at all → **Please skip to number 4**

3. What is your preferred method of fishing for blue catfish? (check one)

- ☐ Rod/reel
☐ Jug lines
☐ Trot lines
☐ Limb lines
☐ Multiple methods

4. Do you fish for blue catfish on the following water bodies?

	Yes ▼	No ▼
Lake of the Ozarks and its tributaries	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Truman Reservoir and its tributaries	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Missouri River	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mississippi River	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. How did you hear about the Open House? (check all that apply)

- ☐ Newspaper ad
☐ Radio announcement
☐ Web page
☐ Friend or neighbor
☐ Department of Conservation office or employee
☐ Other _____

6. How far did you travel (one way) to attend this meeting?

_____ Miles

Appendix 4

INFO ON *Blue Catfish* PROPOSED REG CHANGES

BLUE CATFISH FACTS

- More anglers spend more time fishing for catfish in Missouri than any other sport fish.
- Blue catfish are slow growing and can live up to 30 years.
- Blue catfish are the largest catfish species in Missouri and can exceed 100 pounds.
- Both Truman Reservoir and Lake of the Ozarks have abundant blue catfish under seven pounds available for anglers to harvest.

THE ISSUE

- Beginning in the early 1990s, input from anglers and MDC staff raised concern about the declining number of large blue catfish in Truman Reservoir and Lake of the Ozarks.
- Of catfish anglers surveyed in 2002, the highest percentage stated catfishing had declined in Truman Reservoir during the previous 10 years.
- Of 308 volunteer catfish anglers, the largest percentage of respondents (41%) ranked their trips poor while the smallest percentage of respondents (15%) ranked their trips excellent.
- Numbers of larger blue catfish in Truman Reservoir and Lake of the Ozarks have declined.
- A study at Truman Reservoir found very high harvest of blue catfish 24 inches and larger.



REGULATION OPTIONS

Medium-size blue catfish are being harvested at a rate too high to sustain quality fishing.

Proposed regulation options for Truman Reservoir and Lake of the Ozarks, and their tributaries, including the no-boating zone below Truman Dam are:

- Harvest 10 blue catfish per day of which either one or two fish may be above the protected slot.
- The three protected slot-length-limit options being considered are:
 - » 24–32 inches (about 5–13 lbs.);
 - » 25–33 inches (about 6–15 lbs.); or
 - » 26–34 inches (about 7–16 lbs.).
- Fish within the slot would have to be returned to the water unharmed immediately.

MDC's preferred option is a 26–34-inch protected slot with a harvest of 10 blue catfish daily of which only two may be longer than 34 inches.

THE EVALUATION

- Blue catfish populations at both reservoirs are currently being sampled using jug lines.
- A recent study in Oklahoma found that mortality of released blue catfish caught on jug lines was low.
- Any regulation put in place will be evaluated no sooner than eight years later to document changes to these blue catfish populations.
- If regulations aren't having the projected results, MDC will make adjustments as necessary.

COMMENTS

- Public comments have been and continue to be a very important part of this project.
- Share your comments online at mdc.mo.gov/node/8390.



Comments from the Open Houses

Comments from the Camdenton Open House

I strongly disagree with the new regulation idea. I don't see many jug or trot line fishermen on the Lake of the Ozarks, the water is too rough to fish
I think there are still a good number of blues, you have to fish the right place and the right time of the year. It will be hard to bring home a good mess of fish and by the possession limit staying at 10. I'm not in favor of this proposal. I hope you will consider leaving it the same. Thanks
Go back to keeping 5, only one 36 or longer
None
None
I think your presentation of information was great. I was particularly impressed with the example stringer of cats that represented daily legal catch under the new proposed rules. I'm supportive of the new regs to ensure the resource is available for future and current anglers in Missouri.
I think there needs to be stricter regulations on trot-lining. So many lines are left in the lake every day, with fish that die on it. A lot of times these are bigger fish, this problem has got worse over the past 3-5 years as weekend warriors have found how good the fishing can be! Anyway just my opinion. All other regulation options look great to me. If you are truly an angler, a picture with the fish is a good enough memory!!
Thanks for your concerns about preserving blue catfish. I support your efforts.
Thanks for all you do to preserve big blue cats
I am all for your preferred slot limit. The problem is getting people to adhere to it. Enforcement will be next to nill.
I think it is a good deal. I really don't catch that many in the slot size anyway and maybe that is the reason for the slot regulation to be instituted.
Cut down on jugs.
None
None
I have fished Lake of the Ozarks for over 20 years. I have not seen a shortage in the larger fish. I have no doubt that there is an abundance of big catfish in this Lake. I do not want to change the rules that are currently in place. Please do not change the regulation.
None
Leave things as they are.
Keep it like it is. If implemented be sure to allow 2 large fish over 34. Keep up the good work.
Let the Science of your findings drive your regulations not politics.
I do not understand how the 5 fish limit prevents larger fish growth. Cannot catch that many. If the slot goes be sure to allow 2 large fish. Why not go statewide because it reduces mistakes. Seems to promote catfish tournaments which I disagree with. Bass tournaments should be stopped during the spawn. I appreciate the opportunity to comment. You people have done a great job in the state of Missouri.
I don't like keeping smaller catfish. I prefer over 8-10 pounds. We like to catch fish to eat and not so much trophy fish. I would prefer it was left the way it has been for years.

Comments from the Clinton Open House

I support the proposed regulation change
Limit jugs to 10 per person
Seems like a great idea. I appreciate the hard work and science behind the proposal
Slot limit preferred method of limiting. Without slot limits the population of blue cats will become small. I would like our grandsons to have the opportunity that I've had to fish for these
We need slot limits to give these fish a chance to grow and stop noodlers take of the big fish. Please get this pushed through before it's too late. Other states have this and it works great for them
Need new regulation in place for Truman/LOZ badly. Catfishing is growing rapidly, and the laws need to keep up with the growth in numbers of anglers, improved methods for catching and improved sonar. Eventually I would like to see a 1 fish over 34 inches statewide and limitations on commercial fishermen, removing trophy catfish from Missouri for sale to pay lakes in other states
No comment
Those are not blue cats
I'm glad the conservation has been started. We need to protect these amazing fish. I think any step in restricting lim lining and jugging is good. I also feel many of the large trophy fish are being taken from the water. Slotting, lim line restrictions, jugging restrictions and without saying keep "noodling" out all together. Thank for the good work collectively we will and can help and preserve these fish.
I would like to see some stricter limits on the use of jugs and trot lines. I would support a 15 total hook limit. These meetings are a good idea, but if reg changes is supported by scientific evidence. I would prefer that the reg change process be speeded up at the expense of not holding meetings. The Conservation Department should not hold up progress because of Ranting and Raving from radio shows (Everhearts) and columnists like Larry Dablemont
I think something needs to be done but the way your slot limit is set up isn't fair I can go for your 26-34 slots if we were allowed to keep two in the slot. I fish a lot of catfish tournaments most of the guys release their fish and our club is live fish at weigh in, We don't have a rule of catch and release but like I said most do especially the 20 pounds, 30 pounds and up.
Something needs to be done about the lack of larger fish around the state. I fish Truman more than any. The size of fish are not what they use to be not sure if this is a total solution but is a step in a good direction. The # of jugs and hooks allowed on the lakes and rivers was to be cut down. I think that would be great also. You have my vote.
Please take a look into harvesting blue cats limits and sizes. Fewer and fewer big blues are being caught in the lake of the Ozarks and Truman waters
MDC needs more resources or angler to enforce laws already in effect. Outlaw stainless steel hooks. Fish fries for donations are the same as selling fish. Not real keen on 10 fish limit. Favor 5 but whatever works. 5
Increase limit more than you propose if you are going to put in slot limit. This is the SHOW-ME STATE show me what we can do with our 1/8 cent sales tax toward MDOC. Also if these regulations go into effect you need to increase possession limits
Where were you 25 years ago when trophy fish were being hauled out by the pick-up loads. I observed MDC jugs in the lake and assume this was for information on numbers and lengths of fish. Only one time have I seen jugs in a good location. You need to have a person who knows locations and type of bait for correct information

I support decisions made for the fisheries resource that are made based on careful, thoughtful and thorough science. Therefore I support these regulations!
I trust your research and believe your science to be sound. I personally know the individuals that have been part of the study. They are professional and have both integrity and character.
No comment
No comment
Leave regulations alone. I am tired of trying to keep up with regulations, blue cats in Truman and Tributaries has not changed but some locations of catching has because of water conditions and fluctuations. I am still catching as many large blue cats as I have for 40 years
It is a good idea if you increase the limit as you plan on doing
Missouri-Show-Me. I love the 26-34 slot limit and more small fish to keep
Not enough checking on ramps for number water patrol and hwy patrol isn't going to see fish in transport. Need more people on ramps and back coves with ramps
No comment
No comments
10 fish is too many. You take little fish. Leave large fish and create a trophy situation that will benefit big money from out of state to hire guides and spend money at Bass Pro and Cabelas and more money in out of state license for the Department. This will end up like your point restriction and otter. Why ask us when you will do what you want any ways.
People using trout lines and jug lines are hurting the fish numbers. People that use jug lines leave them out for weeks at a time
Don't change anything. You haven't given the reduced limit time to work yet. Cut number of hooks on trot line and jug lines in 1/2
This is the dumbest rule ever thought of. There is no problem.
I strongly disagree with the slot limit. You can't help the population by allowing people to keep the young small fish. If you wipe out the young small catfish every year there won't be many to grow bigger. Plus your increasing the amount of young fish to keep. Where exactly on Truman Lake were the studies done? You don't name boat ramps or anywhere the catfish were caught and measured from. Try different methods of fishing and take advice from people that do it every day and for a living! If it ain't broke don't try to fix it.
I agree with all your recommendations. I like them actually. But if you want more small fish caught and kept, then you have to increase the possession limit. Most people fishing for blue cat are running lines of some type. It is too much work to do for one day. It's nothing to catch 10 fish under the slot in one day. So if you truly want more small fish taken you have to increase the possession or you will not achieve your goal. Dennis Hull e-mail: rdthunter2@yahoo.com
No comment
Leave it like it is only limit you to 1 fish over. Be much simpler. The slot limit would be confusing and hard. To measure a fresh caught blue
The fish protected in the slot limit may not have the genetics to get above the proposed slot limit. This is typically the size I catch when fishing, under the slot limit I wouldn't be able to keep the majority of the fish I catch, although many times this year I have caught and released all my caught fish. I fully endorse protecting the big fish, but disagree protecting a fish that may not have the genetics to reach trophy size. Oklahoma regulations would work well at Truman

I believe the 26-34 to be the best choice. The 10 fish limit seems to be a little in excess but you have more information than we do
I am a strong supporter of the new catfish regulations
I am not in favor of the new regulation. I think the new regulation will have negative impact on the region. It may be we need to cut back on funding for MDC. I don't believe the percentage figures stated by MDC on the harvesting of these fish. I catch catfish to eat, not to brag about. The older fish are not good to eat, they have too much dark meat and fat. From my experience there seems to be enough catfish out there now
I feel the large catfish of all three species are being over exploited on Truman. I'm not sold on the proposal slot C particularly its lower limits but support the concept of improving the overall population size
No commit
I am not in favor of the proposed changes. I feel further study is necessary
I prefer no change to the rules
No comment
No comment
I don't think most people think that rod and reel fish hurt the fish population. The trot line fishing is killing the numbers and we are catching the big fish. Put a limit on trot lines and jug lines. I hear people talk about catching 3 to 5, 30 to 65 pounds fish several times a week.
Smaller slot-10 per day with 2 over slot
I think it should be put to a vote to the licensed angler. A couple of people depend on the larger fish for food
Against this and hope it does not pass
Because of the cost of food I prefer 25-33 slot, 2 over slot and 10 limit
No comment
There is big blue catfish in Truman Lake you just got to have the patience to catch them. I think you should keep the limit the same. Enforce it. I've been fishing Truman for 15 years. Thanks. I would say 26-34 protected slot
I am not in favor of the slot limit about 80% of the fish I catch would be in the slot. I do not feel we are overstocked with small fish. I would like to see the limits left where they are.
I think these three slots need more study before you do anything like this.
I'm full in favor of this regulation and hope to see a rise in the quality and number of trophy size blue catfish in Truman and Lake of the Ozarks
As an angler with three boys we enjoy all Missouri has to offer. As a family we set lines and rod fish as often as possible. We supply fish for a family and church fish fry which is enjoyed by lots that can't fish. If this regulation passes it will be impossible to catch the fish we need. The cost of fuel, bait and tackle would cost so much it wouldn't be worth it if you could not keep the fish you catch. If you clean a blue catfish correctly there is not enough meat on a small fish to warrant taking its life. The economic part of it would cost bait store and tackle, hotels and fuel. I have met several people over the years trot lining, jugging, they are not going to spend the money to come here if they cannot keep the fish. They are not going to come and spend money here.
I would prefer the 26-34 slot. I think that trotline and jugs need more law enforcement
No comment

No comment
There is no problem in this lake while blue catfishing
I don't think slot limit is the right approach. Limit the number of fish in the possession to one or two over 25 to 30 pounds. My grandkids love to fish for blues and it would be difficult to make them understand that any blue that they caught over 4 or 5 pounds they had to throw back
I am not in favor of the proposal, my trips result in good success catching catfish. Living in the lake area, I do not believe the statistics in your study are valid based on my experience as well as my friends. My choice would be to leave the current regulations like they are
Keep on and we will repeal the 1/8 cent tax. You are catering to sport fishermen. Slot limits do not work
No comment
There is "NO PROBLEM" with the bluecat population on Truman Lake
Instead of a slot limit, the number of fish kept to one or two fish over 25 to 30 pounds. I fish on Truman Lake 70 to 80 days per year and 90% of the fish I like to keep are in the 5-20 pound range. Rarely will I keep a fish under 5 pounds because there is not much meat on them. A slot limit is not the answer.

Comments from the Warsaw Open House

No comment

No comment
No comment
The higher minimum makes the slot more palatable. The people of my fishing community will more hassle than benefit from this regulation. I think this is mainly to benefit trophy fishermen. The fish in the slot that die on the hook will not benefit anybody
In my opinion: I live 270 feet from LOZ on 86 1/2 mile marker. From what I see and hear I'm surprised this is just now being brought to people's attention. My feelings are a limit should consist of 6 fish with only 1 fish being over 36 inches and the rest must be less than 24 inches. That's just for blues. For channels 10 fish with 1 being long those 24 inches. As for flatheads 2 fish limit with 1 being over 30 inches. We have the resources to be able to have one of the best fisheries in the country for any species of fish. Let's reduce the limits! We have the forage that can support a larger population of fish. Thanks. P.S. Raise the length limit on crappie to 10 inches
The Conservation works very hard for the people. Great job.
No comment
Make slot limit 24-32"
I really do not feel there is a need for a slot limit on blue cats. If you decide that it needs to be then I think the 3 options you are considering are too small. I feel if there is a slot limit then it should start at the least 30 inches or the bottom end. And if catfish is on a jug or trot line and when you get to him he may be too weak to recover or too stressed. So if it is in the slot limit and you catch it and it dies I feel that would be a waste. I eat every fish I catch.
The slot you proposed will stop my catfishing
We fish for the fish to eat. With the slot limit we can't buy our bait and throw about all our fish back. So we will have to stop fishing. Times are hard.
Why hasn't the Universities been involved? Why haven't a genetic study been done to find out how many fish have the potential to get above the slot limit? Not all fish have the genetics to get above the slot limit, why protect these fish? The department admitted an overabundance of smaller fish, yet they were used to develop the 22 inch average in this study. 2 fish over 30 inches with a 10 fish limit seems more logical and better accepted.
I feel this will hurt the crappie fishing because the fish in the slot that are released will eat a lot of legal size crappie. Fishery-why do something that will hurt it? Crappies Masters will probably go away and that hurts our economy
Online. Not in favor
Not in favor. Online.
No comment
I will go along with the new reg but as I said I do not pay taxes to support tournament fishing, but I do support conservation because they do an excellent job in all fields. Tournament fishing should not have a say about our tax supported fishing.
This decision will cause a drop in the ability to provide much of the meat I usually harvest for my family. The slot you will be taking away (much like you did with the deer antler restriction) takes the prime/choir meat away from those of us that harvest for food. I don't trophy hunt nor do I care about mounting a large fish or deer head on the wall. It would appear that you may well be accommodating the guides and outfitters rather than those of us depending on the harvests for food or at least it would appear to be so
No comment

No comment
I trust the judgment of MDC. It is a study that will be ongoing and therefore I think it is good
I would not like to see a slot limit on the blue cats. There has to be a better method to this problem. Stocking, less hooks, protected areas.
Limit 5, 1 long, cut down on the # of jugs, enforcement of regs, enforce the name on trot lines, ticket people for leaving them out and need more agents
No comment
No comment
No comment
No comment
Anything less than 5 pounds need to be returned to the water. It is a waste to keep fish that you can't filet
No comment
No comment
No comment
No comment
No comment
No comment
I support the proposed new regulation. I believe it is long overdue. Could consider more stringent law on the larger fish
I am for the new proposed regulation
Great program! We hope the system works
I am glad that there is going to be a slot limit, but I think the lower number needs to be larger than 24 inches. When the fish are biting most fish you catch are bigger than 24 inches. I am also glad for the no boating zone being included in the limit. Is the cable going to be taken out or not? It is in the way when you hybrid fish.
I think these changes will improve the overall blue cat fishing.
I do not like it
I strongly disagree with proposed slot sizes and limits. I feel the fish that are in the slot limit are the fish that anglers target. The bigger fish are fine, but are not a huge necessity in our angling needs. I feel this slot will decrease the amount of fishermen that are needed to harvest the smaller blue cat. Who wants to spend the time to get the bait and get to a spot to fish just to catch a bunch of dinks. If we can only keep one fish above the slot who cares how many there are. I catch plenty of fish that are in the proposed slot
No comment
I agree with the upper length slot. Also the limit of 10 fish. Also no more than 2 above the slot
Great idea. We need to do everything possible to make sure our children and grandchildren have the same advantages that we as ethical fishermen have had in our lifetimes. Good job MDC
Like idea for improvement of fishing slot on low end 10-17 pounds
No comment
No comment

I feel like you're causing an undue hardship on those of us that travel great distances to catch fish for feeding our families. With the cost of fuel and bait we're stretched pretty thin on the number of trips we can afford

Appendix 6

Online Comments-These comments were copied directly from the database as written. The only changes made were names were deleted from the table.

<p>I have been fishing Truman Lake since it filled. I lived on the Osage arm as well as the Tebo Creek arm but moved due to job changes. We vacation Truman lake annually and fishing and hunting are why we go. This proposed catfish slot limit is unfounded and if you would ask those who fish it regularly and used our input we would help you to realize that your "Research" has a hole in the bottom of your bureaucratic bucket list. The shad are so thick you could commercial fish them and not even put a dent in the population. The blue cats are prolific and real research would prove that Truman specifically, has the highest population per acre of water in the United States. Sportsman are who put you in business many years ago but it seems with the most recent "Shove down our throats" legislation, has shown that you have forgotten the sportsman, and where your existence came from. Leave the fish alone on Truman! They are fine. FYI....your little math quiz to prove this is coming from a human pretty well describes the lack of intelligence behind these proposed changes.</p>
<p>I think the MDC has gone above and beyond doing background research on this issue. Not only have they studied the catfish populations in these reservoirs, they've modeled many different scenarios to come up with the best possible regulation to increase angler satisfaction. As with many other regulations, the initial reaction of the public will turn into satisfaction once they start seeing the results of the limit. I feel they have listened to the public's opinion on the issue and have taken them into consideration as much as possible. All the nay sayers see is what they will be out in the present not the greater benefits they would see in the future. They aren't the ones that are responsible for managing our state's resources and for good reason</p>
<p>I've been fishing with my family for as long as i can remember. I have been raised on Truman Lake. The size of the fish that you catch on a normal basis is much smaller than what it use to be. I mean when I was a kid you had to really keep and eye on your rod cause, it might not be there when you turn your head away and turn it back. Due to huge fish ripping it over the stick that you picked out and stuck in the ground for your rod to set in. You just don t hear much of these kinds of these oh crap my rod is gone stories like you use to. My uncle and I both strongly believe that Truman Lake and it s branches are over fished. I believe that this slot limit is not a total solution but it is a good damn start. For all the people that put out 500,000 jugs all over the lake and 300 trot lines and double dip on your limit every day that are against the proposed regulation would hate to hear what really needs to be done. And to all that are on the fence about it don t listen to all the negative opinions of the people who are just trying to sell you bait or the ones that are selling a fishing trip. The bait sellers are just out for the money. The people selling the fishing trips it shouldn t matter to them they are professionals they can catch whatever size you want. They don t tell you how to do your job s so let them do theirs. P.S. Have you been seeing all the nice bucks running around hmmm I wonder if it s from the point reg. put in a few years ago? :)</p>
<p>I have a lake home near mm62. I can tell you that there are several men in this area that fish every day of the year and are very good and dedicated at it, taking 30-50 pound fish on a FREQUENT basis via trot line. I have no idea what they do with all the fish, but I can tell you that I enjoy fishing for large catfish primarily with rod and reel, releasing most, and feel these men and others like them are jeopardizing the future of such fishing, especially for the next generations. While these guys are nice guys and I would hate to see them get in trouble, I just feel they are old fashion "meat hunters". Your proposed regulations will be less effective without better enforcement.</p>
<p>I oppose increase to 10 slot ok, stainless steel hooks should be outlawed when left on old trotline fish hit them favor more inspections on jugs & trotlines</p>
<p>Hello and thank you to all MDC - We are all for all of your conservation efforts and rules to protect our resources fish and game especially new regulations for catfishing what ever the size and quantity limits</p>

are. The new slot limit rules will be great what ever you decide they will be, but we think 1 jumbo keeper per person is plenty along with the other keepers a single angler can keep. We are still sad that our fish (BIG PAPA) didnt survive. Keep up the good work - glad to hear from you any time.
I think that the extreme harvest of catfish is somethign that is overlooked not only in the Truman Reservoir but on major bodies of water such as the Mississippi River.
Thank you. This is a great start, but regulations need to be in place state-wide. Our river systems are in danger of being overfished, particularly the Mississippi River from Alton to Cape Girardeau. I applaud you for being proactive on this issue and hope you will consider these same regulations for our major river as well.
Some kind of protection for larger blue catfish is long overdue. It takes decades for these fish to grow large and we are harvesting large ones at a alarming, unsustainable rate. If future generations are to ever see large catfish, other than in a public aquarium, and have the opportunity to catch on, we must begin protecting. Size limits have been dramatically effective at increasing the harvested size of many fish species. We must do the same for blue catfish.
I like the 24-32 slot best but would support any of the 4 three I like allowing one fish above the slot much more than two.
I think it's great you guys are doing this for the lakes. I wish it could be done on the Mississippi River also. I have fished Pool 20 my whole life. Around where the Des Moines river dumps into the Mississippi. The blue catfish fishing had became very good the last few years. Better than many pools on the Mississippi until you get down to Alton in my opinion. Last winter commercial fisherman drifted nets behind wing dams and loaded up with 30,000+ pounds of catfish. (That's just the number I had heard about, could be more). I stopped at the fish market one afternoon and a guy had a boat
I also support a one catfish over 34 inches law like Tennessee has. I would also like to put a stop to commercial fishermen transporting fish to other states pay lakes.
This should really bring back the fishery - good luck
I like the idea to raise the limit
This is needed State wide, the Mississippi river is getting raped of it's -big fish, please make this state wide!!!!
I have been fishing truman lake since it was damed up and even before on the osage river. The blues I caught were like now small and large. I fish for the table and not for the size, where as now we have clubs that say they don't have big fish, next bass fishermen will say we don't have big bass, are we going to cater to the clubs? These lakes in missouri are for rec. and fishing, not for business like the bass clubs and catfish clubs. Like one day I had a bass fisherman tell me that every time he found a troutline he would cut them because he didn't like them, I said ok I don't like boat trailers at the boat ramp and I would cut his tires, his reply was you better not, ok what is the difference. We as fishermen have to get along even if it is not for our own benefit. I don't pay tax money for conservation to support cat clubs, which I am proud of our conservation and they should be supported because of the good work they do. but not to support clubs in which the top of the clubs membership makes money off of the tax money.
I fully support the proposed blue catfish regulation changes. Like many avid catfish anglers, I have noticed fewer large blues. When I pursue blue catfish, the challenge for me is to catch big fish (30 lbs or better). However, it has become so difficult to find big blues in the last decade that I find myself fishing for crappie or some other species instead. Just thinking of the thousands upon thousands of hooks via trotlines, limblines, juglines and rod and reels that a catfish on Truman must avoid to reach its potential is mind boggling. Hopefully this regulation change will be passed and I will someday get to see my kids fight a monster blue cat! I appreciate the opportunity to comment.
Can't wait to keep 10 fish instead of 5! Smaller ones taste better, and let's save all the big ones get even bigger. Catching bigger fish, and more fish on the table. This is a win-win, great job MDC.

I am a life time missouri conservation partner, and fully support slot limits on the LOZ/Truman system. Too many people view this as a limitless resource, it sadly is not.
1 bluecat 34" length law
This seems like a win win situation for both anglers and the resource-Blue Catfish. I think you could categorize anglers as either meat anglers or trophy anglers. The proposed regulation caters to both demographics. On one hand a person can harvest more smaller fish to fill their freezer and the other can hunt for elusive monster bluecat. The MDC has a mission to protect and manage the fish, forest, and wildlife resources of the state and this regulation will ensure a sustainable population of bluecat for future generations. Not only is sound science involved but input from local stakeholders. The bottom line is the population of blue catfish in Truman Lake and Lake of the Ozarks is in a vulnerable state. Their populations of blue catfish are being exploited and MDC has the information needed to restore balance based on years of scientific study by the agency. Listen to the experts and pass this regulation.
I support any stronger regulations than we have now.although it needs to be one fish over 34" per day period. Throughout the whole state.
This rule change will require substantially enhanced enforcement, particularly of set Line fishermen.
Should be statewide, including the Mississippi & Missouri Rivers (which would be more restrictive than border states and apply to them). No need for slot limit, just only one fish over 34 inches or even 28 inches. Apply it to both Blues & Flatheads.
Hello, I am glad that you are looking into making changes to the catfish regulations this is becoming a fast and growing sport and needs to have the same protection we put on other sport fish. I how ever think this should be a state wide deal not just on the two lake but we have to start somewhere. Please continue to look into protecting the trophy catfish in your state as i would love to be able to come over and fish with some of my friends from you state with the chance to catch a true trophy...
I strongly support this science based approach to catfish management that MDC is proposing. I hope that just a few strong voices in opposition won't be able to convince MDC administration against going with what the majority of catfishermen want to happen.
My boys love to go out fishing with daddy and come back to tell me all their fishing tales. The best stories are the ones where they spread their arms open wide and say, " we caught a fish this big, mommy!" They usually have a photo to proove it too. I want to ensure that they will always have those fishing tales to tell and I know that the Conservation Department is doing all they can to make sure that happens. I believe that they are doing their research and proposing what they feel is the best option for regulations to help the big fish get bigger.
Great start, but falls way short. You obviously know there is a problem you have addressed it once with the closing of noodling a couple years ago, and now this. Like I said great start. STATE WIDE REGULATIONS is what we need. Please remember your title Missouri Dept of CONSERVATION.
Im not from around the area, but what i am hoping for is this leads to a similar slot limit on our river systems. We are in dyer need of this for all of missouri. If we dont take action now, we will be in a world of hurt in the very near future. I can already see a huge difference in the quantity of quality fish in the mississippi. Alot of this is due to commercial fishing, similar to what happened on the missouri before action was taken to stop the harvesting of our big fish. A prime example of great conservation of our big fish is our southern states. I put on alot of catfish tourneys that are 100% catch and release, and its pretty sad when you get some of the countries best catfisherman, and we are bringing in 30 pounds of fish and thats winning the tourney, but you hear about commercial fisherman taking litteraly 2 to 3 thousand pounds of catfish in a four day span. Seriously i dont think eveyone understands the downward spiral our beautiful river system is in. So in short, i hope this passes and brings back Turman to the world class fishery it once was. There will be alot of pressure in the near future for a slot limit in our river systems, if not we are all doomed.

I think it is a great idea. I would also love to see this rule be set in place for the entire state of missouri. I know to many people who run trotlines and keep every fish they get regardless of size, and that is a shame. There are plenty of fish to be caught for eating without keeping trophy fish. I believe this should set in place for channel cat and flatheads as well. We need to make sure there are plenty of trophy fish for future generations of missouri fisherman to have a chance at catching. Thank you for your time and attention to this extremely important matter. Sincerley, Neil Lavy (concerned Missouri fisherman)
I would like you to leave it at 5 blues a day and maintain a 1 over 33 inch a day. I would furthermore wish these restrictions on all of Mo. waterways and lakes. We need these rules to provide and protect a trophy fish population which would increase tourism and recreation. We do not need game hogs anywhere. Thank You, Pete
I support coservation efforts to protect trophy catfish. These 2 lakes are a start. I hope to see statewide in the near future to protect these great resources in our rivers also.
Personally I feel that any Blue cat over 15 - 20 lbs should be released unharmed back in to the water. Also any Flathead over 20 lbs should be released.
I think the slot limit idea is a great one, and would vote for the above the slot limit to be one.
Jug fishing seems to be the cause-over fishing
I believe this would be a great idea. I believe the slot limits should be from 24 to 34 inches. I also believe there should be heftier fines for those in violation of this and any other laws dealing with bag limits or other conservation regulations. Thank you.
As a recreational fisherman, this new regulation would not be of any help. Please do not follow up with this new regulation or my fishing days are over.
In my opinion there needs to be a stricter regulation on where people can fish and how many fish they can harvest. Below bagnet dam has declined dramatically over the past few years, there have been so many angles down there keeping whatever they catch and the fish population just isnt there anymore. I think there should be a new fish zone above the boat ramp in bagnet unless your fishing from the bank and then you can only keep two catfish no matter what size. The new regulation that you are talking about instating would not produce bigger fish but more or less keep the same size fish, because people will be harvesting lots of medium sized fish. There NEEDS to be fish reserves on the river and more conservation personel making sure people are abiding by the laws put in place IE tagging troutlines and juglines, and making sure people arent over harvesting. Fishing has become so popular again and people just arent paying attention to what there doing to the environment around them. If we dont start regulating angles more there wont be any catfish around to catch in another ten or twenty years. Overharvesting has become a big problem and needs to be dealt with. I still suggest no fishing zones in certain parts of rivers and below dams and certain wing dikes. Hire more conservation agents to cover more water and land to make sure people are doing the right thing because rest assured there is always that small number that screw things up for everyone.
Why not put a no harvest on blues for a number of years and increase your channel and flathead daily totals? If numbers are a problem I am sure we catfishermen would understand. What I do not understand is record blues are caught every year so why not protect them for say a 5 year period, similar to the "antler restrictions in deer hunting"??
I support this regulation. I applaud the regional staff working tirelessly for years trying to put in place a regulation that could sustain a once thriving fishery. As a die-hard angler and supporter of MDC I understand the importance of balancing human dimensions and science. I felt that the regional staff has been doing an excellent job in showing the positive aspects this regulation could bring to not only the fishery but also the local economy. It is unfortunate that a small percentage of the residents in this area unfairly criticize MDC and staff and that this bullying from a few individuals has marred the positive attitudes most residents feel about the staff and the agency as whole. My only complaint is the long

road this has taken. Leave it to Jefferson City and state government to drag this regulation proposal for years. These communities could be seeing positive gains in the fishery already if this would have been accomplished sooner. Instead, MDC at the upper management level and Jefferson City has once again proven the inadequacies of state government. It is unfortunate that such talented staff members are stifled by the bureaucracy of state government.
This is what catfish need. People killing giant fish has got out of control.
I remember running into MDC biologist who were doing a study on crappie on the James River Arm on Table Rock in the late 60's. Their study and a MDC study on Stockton, I think Stockton is the right lake, lead to a daily limit and length limit on crappie. We have great crappie fishing in MO due to those studies. The MDC set a length limit on bass for a reason, give bass under 15" a chance to grow up. You took the time to meet with deer hunters and through MDC's knowledge of whitetail deer you determined that we should only take bucks with four or more points on a side as to increase the size of the racks on harvested trophy bucks. I have to believe a slot limit on blue cats fall in the same category as crappie, bass and trophy deer. I would say let your success speak for its self. If your studies find we need a slot limit so people can catch bigger blue cats and that's what people want I encourage you to set a slot limit that is fair for everyone. I don't see any sense in raising the limit from five fish a day to ten fish a day, we can only take five bass daily, why should someone be able to take home 10 blue cats, I think that is a little strong. Five fish a day seems to make more sense to me. You know one heck of a lot more about blue cats than I do I have to listen to what you, the MDC, think is best for Missouri. Jack Dotzman. Leeton, MO
I love fishing for Blue Cats, I'm a sport fisherman and fish with rod and reel only. My comment, is concernig the number of people fishing with jugs and trot lines. It is not uncommon for me to see people setting out 50 or more jugs. I also know of people that do not stay with the jugs that they set, in my opinion this is wrong. I release the big fish that I catch, and only keep what I will comsume, those are the smaller ones. In my opinion, restricting the number of hooks a person can use, the way they can be used, and enforcing the exsiting laws would be very helpfull. If a slot regulation is going to be put into place, I would perfer seeing the 26-34 inch slot. This will allow for the harvesting of quality sized fish. Thank you for allowing me to express my opinion. Charles Mcleland
Why don't you go on Missouri Out Back and have a discussion on air about this topic , and while your at it bring the people who are supossidly in favor of this regulation that you the MDC are bringing to the table. My suspicion is you the MDC have someone with alot of money and power who is pushing this.Put the person on the air.
rod and reel is not the problem limit the trotliners and jugs and limb liners to a month or two
great idea, we need to protect the trophy size fish. how about doing the same for flatheads
I believe that you should put a limited season for trout lining. Because in the middle of the night they have 33 hooks out and people will go out on the water at night time and keep all the fish without anyone knowing. I have also seen a lot of big fish laying on the trout lines dead due to the fact the irresponsibility of the line owners not checking them fast enough and regularly or once they are done fishing they just leave the lines where they are and fish swim by snagging themselves on the hooks and are left to die .
I am filling out this in support of my catfishing brothers to help better the catfishing in the state of Missouri. Up here on the Red River of the North the states of North Dakota and Minnesota implemented a protective slot limit on channel catfish many years ago. Our limits are 5 fish per angler daily/possession with only 1 allowed over 24". Our fishery is know internationally known as a "Trophy Channel Catfish Destination" We now have anglers from all over the United States traveling here in search of the trophy channel catfish that call the Red River home. This could only be preserved because of tight regulations and good conservation. I am in full support of a tight slot limit and tight possession

limit on catfish in Missouri (statewide) to protect trophy blue catfish and to support the sport fisheries of Missouri to be improved to trophy destinations for anglers from all over the country.
Regulation is essential for the future of the blue catfish fishery.
We need to encourage more catch and release of large catfish
I like 24 to 34 slot with one fish over 34
I think what you are proposing is a great great step to preserving the blue fishing in your state. I am an out of state fisherman who holds a current out-of-state MO fishing license and we do fish in your state frequently. I have thought for sometime that this kind of regulation is needed statewide as the mississippi still holds great numbers of fish but I have seen first hand what commercial fishing takes each day and would love to see our state, along with MO/IL start protecting the resources better.
I avidly fish Lake of the Ozarks for catfish and have for over 20 years and I rarely see anyone else fishing for catfish. I see fewer and fewer people fishing for catfish every year. I do agree that I used to catch bigger fish but now I catch more fish than ever. I do not believe that fishing pressure has anything to do with the decline in the size of the large fish. I realize your survey showed a large percentage of fish recaptured but let me ask honestly where did you do this survey. let me guess, it was the tail race below Truman. this is about the only place on the lake that there is any significant fishing pressure on catfish. I fish the area between the 20 and 50 mile marks on Lake of the Ozarks and we can catch more fish between the 5lb and 15lb size range than anyone can possibly want. we almost never see anyone else cat fishing. even the trotlines have been disappearing more and more in recent years. FISHING PRESSURE IS NOT THE PROBLEM! your proposed changes will pretty much ruin my sport fishing for probably the rest of my healthy life. if you are interested in the opinion of a real catfisherman that has been in the sport for his entire life please contact me. Sincerely, Dennis Harmon: 573 216 1000
We feel that there are still plenty of big blues left in Truman Lake. Upon a normal year the water fluctuates from normal pool to below which makes the bigger fish go to deeper water which makes them harder to find.
This is a necessary move for the health of the species.
support
This should be decided by biologist, through sampling, modeling and working with public. It should not be decided by an online vote that anyone with an personal agenda can submit to. I hope this is not what it appears to be, if so then the founders of the Missouri plan have severely fallen short and upper management has failed. And all this on the MDC 75th anniversary!
This is great! Who doesn't want to catch a bigger catfish? This would increase the likelihood of that.
I think it sounds like a great plan, it will allow us to keep enough fish to eat and the slot lets more fish get bigger and everyone loves that opportunity to hook into a big one. If reports/studies show that Blues and flatheads are being effected why not implement this program for both?
I personally do not agree with this at all. I want to keep the fish inside this slot not throw them back We go fishing to have fun and get a nice mess of fish for some delicious table fare . Not for it to be a good time throwing everything you catch back and cleaning a bunch of little fish. What is the point, its a lot of work cleaning those so you think I should have to only clean small ones? Maybe two big ones, I don't see what this reg is going to acomplish !
I don't fish either of these lakes much. But I am strongly supportive of any measure taken by MDC to increase the quality of Missouri fishing. Of the listed slot limits listed I'm most in favor of 26-34 inches (7 to 16 pounds). Personally I feel a 5 lb catfish is still good eating size, and with the extra protection on the upper end, I feel that chances for large to trophy size fish will increase. Really who doesn't like catching a fish thats a true monster.
I also support the taking of only one large blue cat, the slot limit size is great ! Living here at the Lake of the Ozarks I have caught a couple blue cats over 60 lbs. on rod and reel , took some pictures and

released them. We need more of that !
This type of management is needed to allow the fish population to recover. I have seen slot limits work in many other water bodies. These fish grow slow and need a chance to get bigger.
I think we need less MDC regulations. not more to be abused by the Agents.
Not interested in so-called trophy fish. I like to take home a few fish that are in the proposed slot limit. They are your best eating size fish. A 5 to 15 pound fish is a trophy in my book any day.
I don't understand the slot limit and putting pressure on the younger fish, you don't do this with crappie, walleye, spoonbill and other fish. I would rather see a size limit of 6lbs. and under fish be protected and the 5 fish limit be kept in place. I agree with limits on the bigger fish of one to two over 34 inches though, but I don't think they are really needed. I fish for catfish on Truman at least once a week and have no trouble catching fish since I learned how to fish for them, I actually think the population might be too good. Trophy catfish didn't get that size by being easy to catch and the anglers that know what they are doing can catch these fish on this lake, they are challenging but I think they are in good supply, takes some skill and the right equipment. This is still a young lake also, takes some time to grow these trophy fish the department is wanting so bad. Most catfish anglers just want something to fry up anyways with the minority going after trophies. I think better enforcement of current regulations is needed more than more rules placed upon honest anglers. Will be attending the Clinton meeting.
it is too easy for people to set trot lines, jugs, bank poles and more. it just seems that all this harvesting is going to run out of bigger fish. i myself release 100% of my fish over 15lbs. protect our resources.
I fish at Truman lake over 100 days per Year. It is a tremendous fishery. I have seen so many blue catfish brought in the 5 to 10 pound range that that it amazes me at times. It takes longer to put on the bait and put out the jugs the it does to catch the fish. The amount of shad in the lake is unbelievable, so there is a great food supply for all species of fish. I can't believe that the catfish population at Truman lake is declining whatsoever. Thank you
I fish Truman and Lake Ozark for Blue Catfish and Flathead. I think all large and small fish should be caught and released in both species. The fish in the 5 to 18 lb slot are the best eating and have the best quality meat. A decline in large fish could be prevented by releasing all fish 20 lb to 50 lb range.
This regulation is a crock of Bull Butter!!!! The only thing you are trying to do is increase the size Of Trophy Blue cats.. You have already said there is a healthy population. I see no reason for this or spending our tax dollars on it. Don't be surprised if you do this that somebody will get enough signatures to make it a ballot issue in Mo. Just sayin...
Dumb
The MDC tagging study proved there was no over-harvesting of any size bluecat, even after encouraging people to catch them by offering \$50 per fish and falsifying tag loss. Only the MDC, which continues to lie about their own data, and a handful of professional catfish guides support this regulation. Everyone knows you can walk on bluecats in both lakes. Fishermen will call for defunding the MDC if this regulation is passed.
I think the situation could be handled with more enforcement of the laws in place. I grew up on LOZ and go there all the time to fish. The illegal use of Trotlines, Juglines and limblines has gotten overwhelming with no repercussions. One cannot go a half mile without seeing several trotlines that have not been used in years, unmarked limblines, jugs floatin with nobody around etc... Much less the "longline" trotlines that litter the lake at almost every turn off the main channel.... Maybe the water patrol should put as much energy in enforcing game regulations as they do "cruising" the party cove. I have fished the lake for over 20 years and have yet to see a Game warden checking anyone on LOZ running limblines, trotlines etc. I don't know if the ever increasing numbers of water patrol on LOZ have the authority to enforce game laws, but if they don't, they should and enforcement of the law should work without changing / creating new laws.

I oppose this for Lake of the Ozarks (LOZ). If you make this law for LOZ, please allow a daily limit of 1 in the slot. We have a small cabin on LOZ and fish off our dock. We get there once or twice a month. Our Grand-kids make it once or twice a year. I don't want to have to tell my Grand-kids to throw back a 10 lb catfish. A 10 lb catfish fillets out nicely and tastes delicious. We love it. If someone wants to catch a huge catfish they should try the Missouri or Mississippi rivers.
I would be in support of the 7 to 16 pound slot limit, with 1 over slot limit. I usually release all my big blues anyway. But catfisherman usually fish in pairs and 2 over slot would allow them to keep 4 right? Thats hard to do now. Get it passed and move on to the rivers!
Thank you for trying to protect this great resource. The two big lakes is a great start but, we really need to go state wide on this. As said before, the catfish is the number 1 sought after fish and we need to protect it better.
I do not agree with the proposed slot regulation. I have seen an increase in med to large blue catfish. If you increase the daily limit on the smaller fish to 10 soon you will have no blue catfish left.
Not for the Lake of the Ozarks . We have kids and grandkids that fish off dock and 5 to 10 lbs is what is caught and you want me to tell them that they can't keep them. Only catch about 4 or 5 a year.
I think that the proposal is the most thoughtfull way to be able to increase the size of blue cats and not shut off the chance of catching a trophy . fish. It will also provide for the every day angler to catch a good number of better than pan-sized fish.
I feel this is merely trying to gain size for sport. If you want to protect the blue cat change the trotlining regulations and enforce current bag limits. The trotliners are who are hurting the blue population.
Thanks
I would like to ensure that my grandchildren and future generations will have opportunities of catching large blue catfish at both reservoirs.
I totally support your efforts to manage catfish. I am a cat fisherman that loves to catch big fish and have found it harder to do. Along with your proposed measure I beg to take a look at putting a season on trotlines, limb lines and jug lines. So many of our big fish leave the lakes this way. Putting a season on them would allow people to still do it but cut down on the number of big fish caught
Adding a slot size would implement a tremendous, checks an balances structure, that would allow this species to flourish while still providing anglers the benefit of keeping fish outside of that slot. This is clearly a win-win scenario that needs to be implemented as soon as possible.
I would definately like to see a slot length limit. I catch smaller catfish all the time but i have never caught one over 5 or 6 pounds. I would like to see more fish of a larger size in the future.
Sounds like a good plan to me.
I think that this should be done state wide
We need less regulation not more. Reduce the daily limits, I hate slot limits, the Big Piney and Gasconade are a nightmare. How is the average tourist supposed to know the slots and where your reference points are? Most people can't tell a channel cat from a blue cat. Trophy hunters (fisherfools) are a major problem, they spread disease and zebra mussels. Quit catering too them!
Somewhat - suggestion: leave 4 blue cat per person per day but limit one blue cat over 20 lbs. total in that 4 fish limit. Any additional cats over 20 lbs. has to be turned loose. Slot limits make it more difficult &/or time consuming for your agents to enforce. Make it easy.
As a tournament angler I am 100% behind all measures nessisary to help insure the catfish will still be a viable game fish for the next generation.
The size of my average fish caught continues to decline each year. Something needs to be done to change that trend.
HIGHLY SUPPORT I FISH THE BIG NIANGUA AND A LARGE MAJORITY WOULD LOVE TO SEE THE UN ANCHORED JUG FISHING GONE!!

<p>The department has for Decades taken actions to improve the fishing & wildlife in this state not only to improve the sport fishing/hunting, but also for the nature lover. These proposals look to allow for the individual who is looking to put fish in the freezer, just catch & release, or the trophy to meet their needs. I grew up here and then traveled the nation, then returned therefore seeing states who have not taken care of business and now have issue in even trying to get back to even.</p>
<p>I think it is a wonderful ideal to limit the # of large catfish. I'm all for this if it helps to protect the large catfish for all the kids in the state to be able to catch them for many more years to come. I have read all these horror things about states like Indiana and Kentucky that won't stop commercial fishing and that they can't catch a 20lb catfish!!! and are allowing the commercial fishermen take the fish out of rivers into pay lakes. That would be very sad to have to go to a pay lake to catch trophy catfish. I think the MDC does a wonderful job at staying in front of the problems before they are a problem!!! just like in whittail hunting with the 4 point rule. We have to protect our state's natural resources! I know other states allow noodling, hogging, handfishing for catfish. In the past MDC allowed this, is this something that might be allowed in the future???? keep up the good work. Anthony</p>
<p>save The catfish for future generations !</p>
<p>I oppose being told I had to release such a wonderful eating fish just a thought here go from 33 hooks to let's say 20 also boundaries such as below the Truman dam where snagging is prohibited let's say between Truman dam and the mile long bridge just a thought there also we have the hatchery next door to the lake there are many things to be done but to tell a man woman child that does not get to fish a lot to release a good fish I oppose this I would hope my tax dollars wisely and not for special interest groups such as tournaments motels and the like I will be in attendance at the Warsaw meeting I hope that any ideas I have mentioned can be of use</p>
<p>I think it would be good I don't fish there very often. I'm from Saint Joseph but I wish we had the same here on the rivers and lakes up here I fish the Missouri river the most and it's hard to catch any big blues or flatheads but if I catch anything over 10lbs I let it go back after a few pics and record weight.</p>
<p>I support change to protect and grow the population of large and larger catfish. I do not agree with expanding the limit from 5 to 10. I fish. The commercial type fishing tactics allowed for catfish should be examined as well. They are sport fish and deserve protections consistent with that. Unrelated, smallmouth bass in our Ozark streams should be catch and release only.</p>
<p>I know I am not a Missouri resident but these large blue catfish need to be protected everywhere so they can pass on their genes to the next generation of large blues. If regulations are not set there will be no large blues for future generations to enjoy catching. The commercial fishing and pay lakes are desecrating these fish with no regard to the future of the species. My opinion is that no fish over 10lbs should be kept. Please take all of this into account. Thank you.</p>
<p>People need to stop OVERHARVESTING the catfish in lakes and rivers. This has turned into a slaughter house. People have no set regulations on bank, trot, and limb lines. One person can take out HUNDREDS of fish a year easily without regulations. If anything turn this into a season, like a month long with a limit on how many they can take, just like a hunting season. If this keeps up, the states are going to lose money in the conservation department because people will stop cat fishing because they have been over harvested and there will not be enough to satisfy the need for all anglers, resulting in less license and permits purchased annually. I feel that they should be made illegal. No sport in it and the fish has to sit and suffer for hours on end trying to get away and if they do they will be damaged and harmed enough that they will eventually die. People follow other states that have regulations in place for this type of thing.</p>
<p>I would be in support of a slot limit that covered even slightly larger fish</p>
<p>they need to enforce them</p>
<p>5 Blues daily protected 26" to 34" with 1 over 34". 5 Flathead daily protected 26" to 34" with 1 over</p>

34". Do The Very Same On The Missouri River And START ENFORCING IT for a change!
I feel fishing has been doing nothing but getting better at these lakes!!! This is the first year I can ever remember catching over 15 blues over 50lbs before winter! I think that the guys running catfish tournaments are behind much of the complaining. A lot of us rely on these fish for food, and don't even think of them as a trophy!
Anything that will help the trophy catfishing available in this area is a great thing. Definitely put in a protected slot limit, and allow only 1 fish larger than 34" per day.
Strongly in favor of the 26-34 inch protected slot and 1 fish over 34 inches per day. Anything to improve the quality and size of the blue cat fishery at Truman and Lake of the Ozarks would be greatly appreciated! Better enforcement of illegal trotlines and trotliners taking more than the legal limit would help also.
We support the 26-34 slot and one fish over the slot. WE would love to see a one fish over 34" state wide!!!!
I would like to see bigger fish in the lake to catch.
I like the idea about the 10 fish limit for more meat and the slot limit to protect the older, larger fish.
I believe to help the biggest blue cat population we need to not allow more then one fish over the slot limit and the slot limit should be 26 to 34 inches and I know that this is a little different but five fish is enough for anybody and just one fish over the slot limit we have to do something about this another problem is the Missouri conservation Department does not have enough people to monitor the problem. We need five times as many fishing and game people on the water as we have now because there's nowhere near enough to watch and monitor these problems. The people that are Trout liners , Limbline ,jugs these are not fishermen these people are there for qualities of fish they don't care who they hurt or how many they get there only after qualities so you can really say that these people are commercial fisherman they are not sportfishermen they care nothing about our fish why allow them to harvest these fish like this has been a problem and it is now truly taken its toll on the population of our large fish. There are regulations for bluegill for Croppie for largemouth bass and for walleye so why why do we ignor are very very important blue cat.
We fish to eat, not for trophys. We like to catch the big ones but we are eating whatever we catch. Why do we need to change the system? So we can have a few trophy fish? Sorry to the trophy hunters, less "LARGER" fish means it will take a little more skill to catch one. It's hard for me to tell my 12 yr. old son we have to throw back his second 15 pound fish because someone wants a trophy!
MDC needs to stop the regulation after regulation! Your studies are not all inclusive. Please STOP the regulation especially for fishing! Have seasons if you need to but STOP, the normal person shouldn't have to take a 300 page reg book EVERY WHERE they go to enjoy the outdoors!
Truman Lake is fast becoming a trophy Crappie fishery. People from all over the United States are hearing about our great crappie fishing here. We should change the length limit of crappie to 10 inches like some other states have and leave the catfish rules alone. The fish that are in the slot limit are the ones that are eating a lot of the crappie that we need to protect-yes 9-10 or 11 inch crappie. I have seen them in the stomachs of the catfish. Why do we need "trophy" catfish-they are generally not as good to eat as the smaller ones anyway. I have a place on Truman Lake-Do a survey on the weekend for several weeks as to how many catfisherman you have versus how many crappie fisherman you have. I think you will be surprised. If you want to pass a new regulation, pass it below Truman Dam, not on the Lake-We want to be able to keep a few of the slot limit catfish too. This trophy regulation would dampen a lot of catfishermen who enjoy trot lining-it is not worth it if you have to let them go. I would be glad to discuss this further with anyone from MDC. I work in Clinton and am here most everyday. Please send me an e-mail if you would like to discuss.
don't know if this works or not, seen a lot of length and amount limits in other fish, and don't know if it

really helps.
as if mdc really cares what the public think.
slot of 24 - 32 with 2 above slot daily
limit 10 slot 25-33 2 over slot
25 to 33 slot with limit 10 keep 2 over slot daily
25 to 33 slot with limit 10 keep 2 over slot daily
With the help of regulations such as this, blue catfish have a fighting chance to become trophy size.
Yes, protect these fish. They are certainly being over caught. Time to make these trophy fish Rod and Reel only!
I think it would be a great change in regulations! I would like to see it be a state wide change. I fish primarily fish the Missouri river rod and reel and catch picture and release anything over 10lbs. Because I'm out there to catch big fish and want to keep catching them. The limb liners and trot liners are taking to many big fish out of the river.
I support this regulation change and find it hard to believe that anyone would appose unless they simply do not care about the health of the fishery. This management strategy of establishing a protected slot and increasing the harvest of smaller fish has been utilized effectively by real scientists for years as a way to re-establish a healthy age distribution in a population. At the risk of going on a rant, anyone who opposes the establishment of a healthy fishery through sound fisheries science is either selfish in that they only care to rape the fishery for their own benefit or are pandering to those who are. In either case, they are obtuse and one would find it hard to believe that it is not deliberate.
Trust your fisheries scientists, use their recommendations, and remove any politics that may be in their way. Managing fisheries is their specialty. They know what they are doing.
I fully support this regulation change and feel it is a very needed change. I have fished catfish tournaments at both locations for last 6 years with alot of very talented catfishermen and the number of quality size fish weighed has declined every year. These lakes have the potential to be great trophy catfish destinations and targets for large tournament series such as Cabelas or Bass Pro Shops which would bring alot of money to local bussinesses but if regulations are not changed soon i do not think that will ever be possible.
I think there should be in forcement on the laws now. We need more Game warrents. The people trot lines need to be ck more offen.
I fish the missouri river mostly and have had very poor luck this year and as a rule of my own I don't usually keep any catfish under 5lbs with a 20 pounder being my biggest catch so far. I support the regulation but I remember my father telling me that its not good to have to many big fish in the lake.
When I do get to catfish I take my kids and the majority of what we catch is between the sizes indicated. I think they should take more time to study Lake of the Ozarks from one end to the other to back up this regulation.
I have not experienced any decrease in the amount and sizes of catfish I usually catch. I usually fish the main parts of the lake, using jugs and sometimes a trot line.
I just attended the open house in Clinton, Mo. I talked to 3 biologists and one warden. I trot line down at Bucksaw. I told all of them that I agree with all points of what they are proposing except one. The possession limit would need to be raised to achieve what you are trying to achieve. Let's be honest, 10 fish is 10 fish. Unless you let me put 20 fish in my freezer, you have not gotten the result you are looking for. The game warden actually got to the point where he told me how to circumvent the law. According to him all I would have to do is GIVE fish to my wife and I could catch more fish. He even said she did not need a license. This is pertaining to possession. I don't think that's legal but I could be wrong. Bottom line is that, I go down to Truman to run trot lines. That takes some effort. I am not going to do that if I can only do that for one day. I use 30 hooks and it is not unusual to catch 10 fish the first time I

run it. So do we (hehe) give them to our wives and kids and go around the law or do YOU make the law to where I can take 20 fish in 2 or 3 days of fishing? I just think you will not get the desired effect you want unless you change the possession limit as well. As far as enforcement you can't do too much unless I am on the water or in camp. Once on the highway I could say I caught fish at Joe's pond, no matter what species. No matter if it's crappie 7 inches long or what it is. So enforcement, once you leave the lake really would fall back to statewide regs. Which was the game Wardens argument. In closing I must say that I agree 100% with the proposals I heard at the open house. Accept for the possession limit. Once again, if you don't let me put 20 fish in the freezer, you have not lowered the population of smaller fish at all. You will fall short of what you are trying to achieve from what I understand. That is reducing the number of small fish while protecting big fish. You guys do a great job. The envy of the Nation and I thank you for that.

Personally I feel that the slot limit is a ridiculous idea. It was an MDC officer that explained to me years ago that 10% of the fishermen catch 90% of the fish. I fished for a couple of years after being told that on a mission to become one of those 10%. I feel I succeeded. I do not and will not catch a trophy fish every time I am on the water or even most of the time. However, I am man enough to say that the reason for this is likely my fault. Be it presentation, water condition, weather or etc.. It is NOT because there are not enough fish in the lakes. To be honest what I feel needs to be done is the enforcement of the laws already in place. By approving this slot limit law fishing Truman or LOZ will become a needless waste of money most trips and therefore would be more of a gamble than a fishing trip. They call it fishing NOT catching. The people complaining about not catching fish are simply finding it easier to complain than to change their tactics. For example; it doesn't matter if there are 100 fish in the water or 1000, if you are not correctly fishing for them you are not going to catch them. Has the limit of only one fish above 24 inches been in place long enough to make the difference it was supposed to make? If it has been it sure was a fast 7 or 8 years. Has the fact that the cable was strung across the river to prevent radio controlled boats from dragging bait to the dam increased the numbers? It was supposed to, supposedly those guys were catching too much of the stock and decreasing the numbers. What are the no boat buoys for below Truman? Oh yea, preventing the unfair catch of fish loaded up below the dam. When the answers being pursued here are not what "studies" were expecting what's next? Catfish season? Here's another question what happens when all this regulation works like regulations on Turkey? One day Missouri is out of Turkey and the next we have so many Turkey that they have eaten all the quail. What about all the poor poor crappie and white bass that get eaten or the stock of all the small large mouth bass that will be eaten and never have the ability to grow. What about when the mighty catfish eats the majority of these fish these fish and the tournaments and their revenue quit coming? The proposed regulations are preposterous and need to be stopped before they get started. In Missouri it is illegal and rightfully so for someone to noodle catfish, it is illegal to use radio controlled boats to run their bait to the dam (once again rightfully so), it is illegal to drive a boat or personal watercraft up to within a quarter mile or so below Truman Dam "rightfully so", it is illegal to capture catfish and other game fish in traps rightfully so. Why in gods name is it even being considered to be illegal for someone to keep the perfect size fish to eat? Sure you can keep 10 little ones, take them home butcher them and savor the tiny strips of meat that remain. This law will promote the culling of fish above the slot limit because everyone will be after that ONE big fish they get to keep and after ravaging some poor catfish in the live well or on a stringer for hours it will be released only to die and be replaced by one bigger or fatter, that is until a bigger one is caught and then that one is released to die. Good grief, this law doesn't even make sense. It does not take much of a personal study to see that these big fish, even huge fish still thrive in our waters. I can take a stroll down the banks one day below Truman and talk to every fisherman there. Maybe 50 at the absolute maximum. the first 25 have no fish, the next 10 have a couple from 12 to 15 lbs, 10 of them are crappie or white bass fishing and have no desire to catch a catfish. 3 have a fish 20 plus pounds and 2 have a fish over 60 lbs. Then I go home

and get on the internet and start to look at the pictures flooding certain sites with guys that all had dream days on the lake and have 4 fish for a total of over 200 lbs etc... OUR FISH ARE FINE! They are in abundance and they are thriving. Enforce the laws we already have in place, give the 1 fish over 24 inches law time to even do what it is supposed to do, and STOP making more laws please.
I THINK TO MANY LARGE BLUES ARE BE REMOVED.WE NEED NEW REGULATIONS THIS ALSO NEEDS TO BE DONE ON THE MISSOURI RIVER BETWEEN KANSAS CITY AND ST.LOUIS
I fish mainly at deepwater boat ramp. I seldom catch a fish outside your proposed slot limit. If you go through with this do you realize that you will probably outside of our small bait shops out of business because people will simply quit fishing for those fish. I know I'm not putting my boat in the water to go catch 2-3 pound fish. If you really want to do something you should regulate the jug fishing. I have been out checking mine and seen pontoons full of people checking literally hundreds of jugs. The slot limit will not work,because there is not a problem.
The results of your survey indicate that 65% think the current regulations are just fine. Please do more to inforce current regs. such as noodling. Do not penalize the majority of us that are law abiding.
I and many of my older friends who trot line are opposed to your Blue Catfish slot limit. If you don't allow at least 2 fish in your slot limit per day per legal fisherman it will not be worth our time, expense, and effort to trot line. I believe that will have a more negative impact on local economy than a few people wanting to catch Trophy Blue Cats. Another negative to your proposal is the impact on our Crappie population. I have caught many Blue Cats with numerous Crappie inside them. One in particular in March 2009 had five Crappie in him.....some measured 12" with their tails already digested. One of your group said he thought they ate Shad. I don't think a large Blue Cat knows the difference between a Shad and a Crappie! I would rather release any Blue Cat over 40" if you feel you have to do something for the Trophy hunters. If you raise the legal daily limit of Blue Cat to 10 the rod and reel fishermen, in order to have some fish, may hurt your Blue Cat population! As for your possession limits, how do you tell how many fish are in a package when they are chunked up? The people who Crappie fish would like to catch Trophy Crappie! Why don't we have a 10" limit on Crappie so a lot more of them get a chance to grow to 15' to 18'? I believe we also need to have "party" fish limit. Example: If there is 2 fishermen in a boat they would be allowed 30 Crappie aggregate.....3 fishermen - fish. I believe you would be making a lot more fishermen happy if you addressed the Crappie population!
I am not in favor of the slot limit proposed because those sizes of Blue Catfish are the best eating size.....not too big or too small.....more quality meat. Crappie are good, but Blue Cat is delicious! My favorite! Catching fish helps us senior citizens (and everyone) with our food expense. Thanks for your consideration. Pat Hubbard.
I eat the small ones anyway and would like to catch bigger fish.
ONCE AGAIN MDC IS CAVING TO A SMALL SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP WITH OUT ANY REGARED FOR THE AVERAGE SPORTSMAN WHO HAS TO TAKE THE ABUSE OF TROPHY HUNTERS OR FISHERMAN
I support the regulation changes. I would choose the 7-15 lb. slot and keeping 2 fish over the slot. I would like to see some more restrictions on jug and trotline methods. I would support a regulation that addresses fewer total hooks in the water.
This is needed badly! Our major rivers need this too!
This is needed badly! Our major rivers need this too!
Just enforce the laws you have in place now and stop people from filling there boats with catfish. You are protecting the size of fish that are the best size to clean and eat. You idiots waste so much time and money with bs like this so you fill like you are doing something.
I support the proposed blue catfish regulations. While I consider myself to only occasionally fish for catfish, my catch rate for fish that would be in any of the proposed slot ranges is very low, with my

<p>catches being "unders". This proactive approach to adjusting the population size through a protected slot limit seems to be a logical approach based on the facts and sound reasoning. It seems that the only other way to increase the population of larger blue catfish would be to increase the carrying capacity of the niche they fill. Even if that were possible, it would almost certainly upset the ecological balance that is in place in these waters. Thank you to the MDC and those that have worked on this project to look out for the future of our fisheries.</p>
<p>I haven't seen the quality control data from the study so it is very difficult to determine the accuracy of the study. MDC mentions comparison of their study to other studies conducted nationwide, which leaves a large gap in comparison to other fisheries. What if those other fisheries are representative to the Osage River watershed (size, climate, reproduction, food, etc...)? I believe that if the fishery is truly declining additional data supporting MDC's claim should be sought. Also note: if the blue catfish regulations were actually followed by anglers and enforced by MDC more closely I believe such a problem or potential problem wouldn't exist. One potential cause to the proposed fishery decline is abuse by anglers in numbers of fish harvested and over the limit hook violations.</p>
<p>As a avid catfisherman normally targeting trophy blues and flatheads by pole and line I fully support the regulation changes proposed. I would also like to see changes made to regulations on the Missouri River. I feel overharvest of large catfish is occurring on both Truman, LOZ and the Missouri River.</p>
<p>This is not conservation. It's taking from the table to give to the elite.</p>
<p>I feel a slot limit will help control the thinning of the larger fish. I also feel that raising the daily limit from 5 to 10 per a day might hurt the smaller fish. I know there are large quintiles of smaller fish but raising that limit over a period of time might hurt them. While the DNR is looking into controlling the harvest of catfish please consider stiffer regulations on trout lines and jugs. A few times while fishing I have seen a boat checking one set of lines then go down river and check another set. I also notice that anytime you run down the Ozark side all you see are jugs and trout lines. This style of fishing has to be hard on the fish population.</p>
<p>What did you base this proposal on? Just reading it makes no sense at all. It seems to me the proposal will discourage fishing and/or encourage poaching. How will you determine in 5 yrs that more fish of the wanted size are available?</p>
<p>I have noticed a substantial decline in numbers of large (20lbs+) in Truman. I don't want Lake of the Ozarks to follow in that pattern. There is no need for someone to eat a 30lb catfish let alone multiple ones when they can harvest a similar amount of meat by keeping a larger limit of smaller catfish. I think we need to completely protect larger blues (25lbs+) for a few years to let their numbers rebound and that is including the protected slot limit because I understand it takes medium sized fish to grow into tomorrow's large fish.</p>
<p>The bluecat regulation change for Truman Lake is about 10 years late in happening. (Huh Kevin S.!) Looks good! Now it is time to get serious about the management of the longer lived Flathead catfish. In the 1980's Flatheads in Truman Lake were commonly caught in the range of 60-80 lbs. Not so any more. I realize that the harvest of flatheads in terms of numbers is much less than bluecats but flatheads typically maintain a characteristically less dense population than Blues. You can make the same analogy with Crappie and LM bass that each have separate regulations pertaining only to the species. Let's separate Blues and flatheads and manage them accordingly with different regulations. After all, anglers can easily identify each species and they will already have a measuring board on board! Might I suggest a minimum length limit of 28 inches for Flatheads and possession limit of two and only one over 36 inches. Thanks for the opp to comment. Dale Cornelius</p>
<p>I think what the MDC has come up with for a slot limit is a good call. I have fished for years for our bluecat and have caught many fish over the length that they have recommended for the slot. As fishermen we are going to have to learn just how to go about catching and releasing fish on our own. If</p>

<p>we really want our grandkids to be able to catch big bluecats in our state it is up to us to make the difference. The MDC can't keep on taking care of our own resources we need to step up and do our part. So when an angler catches one of our truly big blues be careful with it take pictures but then let it go for another day that is truly the best way. I'm not saying don't keep none for the family fish fry but who really needs more than it takes for a meal anyhow. What the MDC has on a limit is more than enough fish to feed just about any family there is. What I have seen over the years is people that get it right and start catching these big fish keep catching these big fish until they are all caught out in a spot or all summer long it is a slaughter basically now that is what I have seen. Don't get me wrong they don't break any laws but really who needs that much fish. Most of the time they will give fish to family and friends because they have so much. That's why I say we need to do our part. We need to start thinking about conservation right beside the MDC to better help our generations to come.</p>
<p>I have been actively pursuing blue cats on Truman and Loz for the past 12 years. In this time I have been releasing all fish over 24", and have participated in the survey Kevin Sullivan headed up several years back. I strongly agree with a regulation change and think that this has been needed for a while. I am strictly a rod and reel fisherman and try to pass on the theory of catch and release of trophy fish.</p> <p>Thanks, Matt Bankston</p>
<p>Very high. This is such a great idea for several reasons. Catfish are so popular because that are so good on the table. That 24-26 inch range is near the top end for the "best eating" fish. Larger are still good but most fishermen prefer the fish that is large enough to easily clean or filet and still have enough flesh for a good meal. Trade-off between size and texture/flavor isn't much up to that 24-26 inch limit but is at larger sizes. Always release anything over 24 inches myself and encourage everyone I know to do the same. While the best eating is, in my opinion 24 inches and under, there is a special thrill to catching a big catfish. Lots of fun and many would pay for the privilege so I think there is some tourism potential here.</p>
<p>I am willing to do whatever is needed to keep fishing available to our youth. I have many grandchildren and they now enjoy fishing as much or more than me. My father told me the stories of very little game in Mo. when he was young. I think the department is doing a fine job and I trust your judgement. Thanks</p>
<p>I believe the slot limit has some advantages and disadvantages. I could accept the proposed slot limit more eagerly as an angler if we were allowed to keep at least one fish in the slot. The size of the fish that we won't be allowed to keep are the ones that I target and enjoy catching and eating. Yes I do want to see bigger fish but it is not that important to me because we can only harvest one or two anyways. I'm afraid it's going to discourage me and other anglers from fishing as much. This could result in even more of the smaller fish. I believe getting to keep at least one fish within the slot would keep people interested.</p>
<p>I have fished for blues on Truman Lake and Lake of the Ozarks all my life and I have never had a problem with catching big blues. Don't let these catfishing guides rule the way we fish in this state it's big money for them and all they are doing is trying to stir up a big hornets nest, thanks.</p>
<p>I WAS UNABLE TO ATTEND THE CAMDENTON MEETING ON BLUE CATS. I CATCH A LOT OF BLUE CATS IN THE NIANGUA ARM OF LAKE OF THE OZARKS. MY PERSONAL RULE IS: 15 LBS OR SMALLER I KEEP THEM. 16 LBS AND LARGER I RELEASE UNHARMED. I RELEASE LOTS OF 20,30 AND 40 LB. BLUE CATS. IT IS A SHAME TO KEEP ANY OVER 16 LBS WHEN YOU CAN CATCH ALL YOU CAN EAT AT 15 LBS. OR LESS. HELP PROTECT OUR OLD BIG BLUE CATS! THANKS FOR LISTENING TO MY PERSONAL OPINION. I AM 59 YEARS OLD GREW UP IN THE OZARKS LIVED HERE ALL MY LIFE. KEEP UP THE GOOD WORK. ROD SULLENS, LEBANON, MISSOURI</p>
<p>I do not agree with the slot limit law. I enjoy catching blues and I also enjoy eating them. I believe that this is simply a way of pleasing the trophy fishermen by making it a trophy lake.</p>
<p>stop the trot lines and jugging for 2 years keep the rule at 3 rods apiece and keep slot limit</p>
<p>I fish Loz. I fully support the changes. I suggest the 7-16 slot. Any fish over 7 gets returned if I keep any at</p>

all. Thanks again mdc.
I prefer the 7-16 lb (26-34 inch) slot limit. 5-6 lb fish is a preferable "eating size" and would prefer to keep those. Also it would be nice to keep two over the slot limit. Normally, a fisherman don't catch more than one over that limit anyway on Truman. It would make it a extra special day if you caught two over 16 lbs.
I think maybe if you put fish back 15- 20 lbs and kept the 8-14 lb size that would help. And maybe 1 large catfish over 30 lbs. That way fishermen could still have a nice catfish to take home.
I think that the goal of allowing the blue catfish to grow larger is a good idea. However, I also know that the length limits which you are proposing would put a major damper on personal fishing, especially when it is done for food. I would not be happy with the proposed regulations as they stand. If you would keep the proposed regulations to just the lake itself and not extend it into the tributaries I believe you could achieve the results you desire while not hindering the ability for families to supplement their meal costs with personally "backyard" caught fish. Perhaps you could shorten the length limit to span only three to four inches instead of eight (preferably in the 28" to 34" span). Some of the best fish is between ten to twelve pounds anything smaller and you end up wasting a lot of the fish when you prepare it. Thank you for listening to my input.
well I fish truman and i only keep cats under 5 lb any other go back so they can reproduce i like what you plan to do and i am all for it
As a Catfisherman in vernon and bates co. for my entire life, I would have to totally disagree with this non proven theory based on public opinion of non TRUE catfisherman. I can prove to you that our catfishing has progressively gotten better over the years, and last year being the best fishing I could ask for. The weather has caused some decline to productive catfishing, however very good fishing in our area. I like eating big fish as do many of my peers but lets face it, most people I see on the water dont have a clue on how to catch catfish. The fish are there and can be caught you just have to learn how to fish. All i see this new regulation doing is limiting good fisherman to catching the small fish that we regularly return to the water so they can grow and not harvesting the mature fish. This is the theory we use with other species and I believe in it. Isnt this why we went to the four point rule in deer? If we take all the small fish there wont be little ones left to grow to mature fish. I strongly suggest we use the theory that has been working and does work and not implement a new unproven regulation based on public opinion of non proven fisherman or people that dont understand catfish and habitate. Thanks.
I like the idea however I fish the missouri river and have been for 40 yrs. I fish about 4 days a week [rod and reel] I am seeing a decline in quality fish also but an increase in troutlining . I fish waverly MO. There are times I'm sure a thousand hooks or more are in the river every weekend. With 4 or 5 people in a boat 33 hooks each . I have talked with several that are taking 2 or 3 hundred pounds a day alot of 15 to 40 pounders I would like to see the amount of hooks per person changed to 15 with a troutlining season
I agree with changing the limit for blue catfish and size of blues that can be taken. I am not sure if I would agree with going from a limit of 5 to a limit of 10. I am not sure why you went up other than you think people will catch more smaller fish. I would think you would want to stay somewhere between 5 to 8 as a limit. I would like to see 7 to 15 lb fish be in the limit area. A 5 lb fish is very good eating. I would also like to see this in the Bagnel Tailwater. The size of fish below Bagnel are not as large as they used to be. We catch a lot from 2 to 8 lbs. Not many over. We have caught them as large as 30 to 40 lbs int he past. I would just have that limit from the dam to the 54 bridge. I wouldn't extend it down stream where there is not as heavy of fished areas. I'm assuming the lengths are from the nose to fork of tail? Might clear that up in later articles about it.
Release all less than 24" & more than 36" (broodstock). Diligently enforce the box fishing/noodling law. This method of fishing only takes the broodstock. Lessen the fishing pressure on the lakes by allowing

elimination of otters and cormorants. There is no lack of shad, so lack of bait should not be a concern.
26-34 INCH /INCREASE LIMIT TO 7
I think that the slot limit would be okay if it passed but if had a choice, I would prefer the 26-34 inches (7 to 16 pounds) protected slot. I definitely catch the least amount of blue catfish in this size range. I would also like to be allowed to keep 2 over the slot limit in the case that I'm lucky enough to catch 2 nice ones. I usually put in at fox run access and usually catch plenty of blue cats, a few small channel and very seldomly come up with a flathead.
It's not that the proposed regulations are bad, but they won't work. First, unlike bass fishermen, catfish fishermen fish to catch fish to eat. Also, catfish are much more popular to eat than bass. In addition, many catfish will not live if released because they are caught on trotlines or jugs by bait and swallow the hook. IMO, Catfish fishermen will ignore the regulations for these reasons. Bass fishing regulations work because bass fishermen don't keep bass anyway since they are often fishing in tournaments and bass are not that good to eat.
The slot limit be will deter the average fisherman from fishing. With the expense of fuel, bait and gear and to only be allowed to keep small fish. If they only catch one or two fish and have to throw them back because they are with the slot limit that fish could feed their family. Many never catch a fish over 34 inches. Their should be no slot limit Limit fish over 26 inches don't make people throw all they catch back
OK with raising the daily limit from 5 to 10. Prefer the 26 to 34-inch protected length limit. In favor of just one fish in the daily limit above the slot limit regardless of what range is selected.
I agree with a balance plan to allow this proposal
If you're going to have a slot limit on blue catfish I think it should be 26-34 inches, but I also think there should be a length limit of 15 inches or more to keep, I see alot of people taking small blue catfish home that are really to small to get any meat off of to eat, and that's what I catch my fish for to eat. MAKE A LENGHT LIMIT SO THERE WILL BE SOME NICE SMALLER SIZE TO TAKE HOME
I think it is a good idea but don't fully understand what limets will be. It has been a long time since i caught a big catfish of any species. Our club also loves fishing also. if and when it is a go, when will it start. thank you David Hayden
like the limit just the way it is.
i like the things the way they are now
I am strongly opposed to the slot limit it is not necessary. I PROPOSE A 10 FISH LIMIT UNDER 26 INCHES AND 2 FISH OVER 26 INCHES WITH NO SLOT LIMIT. It will have the same results with maybe a few less trophy fish, it will take longer but it will be a better solution for people who don't have the opportunity to fish but once of twice a year and like to eat fish. Over time slot or no slot the 26-34 inch fish population will increase. The slot limit fish are the best to eat and many people consider a 7-16 pound (the size in the slot limit) fish a trophy fish. People will lose interest because of turning back an increasing number (26-34 in or 7-16lbs) of fish in the slot limit and smaller fish population may increase more. Truman Lake should not be a trohpy lake it should be a lake to catch and eat, not catch and release. The most popular size of fish that is kept from trot lines and jug lines is 26 inch and larger. Small fish are thrown back to allow them to grow partially because of lack of knowledge. But with a new limit of 2 over 26 inches compared to 10 n the 1980's and a limit of 5 in 2006, larger fish populations will increase. The average fisherman will not be able to afford the fish to feed their families the expense of line, hooks, bait, fuel, etc and only be allowed to keep small fish will not be worth the expense when they it throw back fish that are within the slot limit. One fish in that slot limit could feed a family.
Your slot limit wont work any better then the catch limit. I see the same ones year after year pulling 500 to 700 hundred blue cats in the 5 to 50 lb. range during snaging season. There even using cut spoonbill for bait and there is alot of it going on. Work on this and the rest will fall in place. Just my thoughts.

I support any proposal to help increase number of bigger catfish. I wouldn't mind if the slot length was a little bigger if that would help increase the rate of success.
I am a fisherman and have a second house on the Lake of the Ozarks, My comments are only about that lake. I travel a lot of the lake. In your video, a fisherman tells an anecdotal tale about seeing less large fish. I can also report that each year I see more trot lines on the lake. They seem to be everywhere now. Does this coincide with the decline. I am not opposed to trot lines although I do not use them. It seems that this is not considered in your proposal. This increase in lines will continue. With more lines with dozens of hooks. They fish that are hooked on these lines will surely not have high survival rates when released. These fish in the slot limit will be hooked on these lines that are unavoidable in many areas on the lake. When and if they are released they may meet the same fate that they do now. Just my thoughts. How about limiting the trot lines so that there will be more fish for every one.
I oppose the large span you are proposing. I think it is too big and the pound to inch ratio is not really accurate. I think 10 lbs and under should definitely be harvestable. I also have issues with this limit being imposed on the tributaries like the Grand River and Big Creek. Those of us that fish these waters are limited by the weather conditions of the year and what is able to make it up the tributaries and the proposed limits would greatly limit what we would be able to keep and feed our family with.
i beleive this is one way to increase the number of larger blue cat on both lakes. however i am not 100 percent in agreement on the catch limit being increased to 10 fish daily.....my opinion is that it should stay at 5 fish daily to help reduce over harvest of small blue cat.
I think this is a great idea! I take my 8yr old nephews fishing at Truman and we catch a lot of small blues. I would like for them and my daughter I am about to have to be able to catch big blues in the future.
If you have a decline in the population you should not increase the day limet.
I would slot it at 6-20 lbs. People should only be allowed one fish bigger than 20 lbs. As an avid fisherman who releases every fish I think people need to release the bigger ones back.
Support, I think it will help. But i don't see a decline here at the lower end of the Lake of the Ozarks . 99% of what i catch i release, the size if Blues that are caught by me range from 20 to 60lbs. I have fewer in the range that you are wanting us to keep the 5-15 lbs. When i lived on the upper side of Lake of the Ozarks i would of said yes there is a problem with size on the Blues. My question would be has this study been done on this lower end of the lake .
I did not like the idea of a slot limit at all on catfish. I believe that catfish are the best amount of food for the catch to feed my family. Why does there need to be a slot limit on catfish? How does the limit help? If there was to be a slot limit on catfish, it should be more along the range of 12-16 lbs. We live on one of the tributaries affected by this proposition and most of what we catch are 10 lbs and below. We are fortunate enough to catch bigger blue catfish once in awhile. However, we did catch one this year that was 19 lbs but under your inch limit, we would have had to throw it back. With the range you are proposing, the amount of food I provide for my family would be significantly reduced due to the allowable fish being so much smaller. I don't believe that including the tributaries is fair to those who are limited to fishing these creeks. There is no reason why the tributaries should be included this as they are limited by the conditions of what is allowed by nature to make it up these creeks. If people are after bigger fish in the lakes, then let these regulations apply to that and not limit an area where the selection is already limited for families needing these fish for food. If you do decide a limit should be placed on the tributaries, it should definitely be smaller slot to accommodate the smaller selection just like there are different regulations for crappie limits on the lakes as opposed to the tributaries. My final thought would be that we are teaching our children, friends and family the values of conservation for ourselves and future generations. There has been multiple times that we have caught pregnant blue catfish and have returned them to the creek to help preserve future generations of blue cats. We appreciate the chance to voice our opinions and to be able to have a say in something that affects our

lives and our grocery bill in such a large way in hard times. Thanks. P.S. Please keep in mind that with the deer population being affected by the blue tongue disease this year, we may need to rely on the creek for more food resources.
Almost all the blue catfish we catch are in the 6 to 16 pound range. Last Sunday we caught 1- 7 pound, 1- 10 pound and two around 12 pounds. If the slot limit rule was in effect, we would not have been able to keep a fish. The cost of gas, bait, hooks and line and a whole day fishing for nothing. This is a typical day. Sure, sometimes we catch smaller fish, but normally they are 6 to 16 pounds.
i am very much against this rule.the mdc has done many good things over the years.it has been a model for many states to build thier own state programs.if there is a need, i am always in favor of new regs.,this is just way out offline with what is out there.catfishing is one of the most laid back, relaxing sports.i also enjoy the meat harvested.catfishing is about the easiest species to harvest.the regs allow people with minimal outdoor skills to have a fairly successful outing.i like the fact that i dont need a tape to measure my catch.with gas prices the way they are,i will not drive 65 miles to warsaw to catch and release most of what i catch.this is not only my feelings ,many i know feel the same way.i feel like the mdc is more concerned with trophy status .i had an agent tell me 25 years ago that the dept. would never manage deer for quality, but for quantity.we know that has changed. the dept has seemed to me to be more interested in pleasing large groups like the hunting clubs,bass tournaments and now cat fishing clubs who are focused on trophys.most people could care less about a trophy catfish,i have taken fish up to 50 lbs.on rod and reel.the ones most of us are after is headed for the table.the quality of the fish is lost when they get over 10-15 lbs.the same agent that told me about the deer management also told me that tournaments are actually illegal and if someone ever challenged it they could stop them.you can not hunt or fish for monetary gain,even if the fish are released.it seems that the groups that spend the most money get preference.mdc is wondering why sportperson numbers are slipping,look at the reg changes and track the decline along the same time.keep it simple,people go fishing to get away from every day stress and just relax.if there is a lot of regs like this ,most will go ride a bike or just take a walk.if there was a real need for this i would be in full support, but this is not needed and will only hurt towns around the lakes ,they are already struggling because of fewer visitors due to gas prices.please remember who funds your dept. you need to listen to the people that support you.
My grandparents had a place on the Osage River (near Horseshoe Bend), and I now own the dwelling. I've fished this area for over 60 years, mostly trotlining. I devote many weekends trotlining during the spring/summer months. The one thing I've noticed over the last 5-10 years is that there are fewer, and fewer people fishing for catfish, especially those who trotline, limblime or use jugs. It appears the younger generation has little interest in these fishing methods. The limits you propose are unacceptable. These are the fish worth keeping, and filleting. These limits will not make it worth my time to continue fishing for my favorite fish.
We have a place on Truman Lake and have learned that there are very few people who know how to fish for the medium and large catfish. We trot line every summer and have found that the the medium size are everywhere. But you need to know how to catch them. By limiting this size, you are virtually going to destroy the trot line sport on Truman Lake.
My husband and I have trot lined all or our married life. The one thing I have learned is that it is a real art. It's not that the fish aren't there, most people don't know how to catch them.The size of fish you are limiting is the prime size of fish we're trying to catch. By limiting the medium size you will totally ruin the sport.
I spend at least 100 days at the Lake of the Ozark's fishing at least 4 hours of each of these days. I probably spend 20 of those days using jugs for Blue Cats. The vast majority of the fish that I catch or in the 5 to 17 pound category. A limit in this size range would probably cause me to quit fishing for this

fish.
I support if allowed 2 fish over the slot limit of 10-18 pounds. This will allow fishermen the chance to catch a trophy fish when spending a large amount of money to fish the state of Missouri. I believe this type of limit will keep honest fisherman honest with the proposed regulations.
I feel we should reduce the number of fish allowed as well as a minimum size limit. The limit on fish over a certain size and the slot limit is also good. We should also reduce the use of trot lines and jugs perhaps limit them to no more than 5 hooks total. If people want fish this bad they should buy them at the fish market. A small number of people are catching too many of our fish.
I support the protected slot-length of 26 to 34 inches, and allowing the harvest of two (2) blue catfish above the protected slot-length limit. However, I do have some concerns about increasing the limit for blue catfish above the protected slot-length limit from one (1) to two (2) in the no-boating zone below Truman Dam, as well as increasing the daily limit for flathead catfish in that zone to five (5) without any length restrictions (as is stated in the December issue of the Missouri Conservationist).
I have been fishing L. of the Ozarks and Truman Lake for over 35 yrs and have caught a lot of blues. Yes I've noticed the decline in bigger fish. A slot limit would help the big ones come back. Most anglers should not have a problem with this. Besides the best fish to harvest for the fish cookers are the smaller ones anyway, there is a lot of waste on the bigger ones. So I have no problem catching, taking pictures, and releasing the larger ones.
Jugging seems to be the problem-maybe limit to 5 jugs
I think the fish over 34in should be limited to one.
why can't we keep this simple, only 1 big blue per day towards your daily limit, which can be a 25lb. fish or larger. every time you have to measure a fish the size you are going for can be a real pain in the ass!
I JUST REREAD THE MISSOURI CONSERVATIONIST ABOUT BLUE CATS. PAGE 17 SAYS IT TAKES 5 YEARS TO GROW 1LB??? DO YOU GUYS EVER GET IN TRUMAN LAKE AND SEE THE TONS OF SHAD SWIMMING AROUND? TAKE A LONG BOAT RIDE, HAVE A GOOD DAY, LEAVE THE TAPE MEASURE AT HOME.
I'm all for it. I'm not interested in keeping that many fish and I'm sure the proposed regulation would achieve the desired results. I've fished in Canada where there's a similar slot limit for Pike, it works!
I support the immediate release of unharmed blues by their weight and length. At the same time if the daily limit raises from 5 to 10 blues then how many left would be able to reach the sizes we are liking to see for those stories we love to tell.
Every year we catch more and more fish most that would fall into the slot limit. In having only 2 fish above the slot limit most likely would be harvested in one fishing day.
I grew up cat fishing and even in the Mo. river I have seen a decline of larger fish, 40lb and larger fish are getting fewer, yes they are still out there but it seems their numbers are getting fewer.
I grew up cat fishing and even in the Mo. river I have seen a decline of larger fish, 40lb and larger fish are getting fewer, yes they are still out there but it seems their numbers are getting fewer.
to many of your anglers you ask are rich city fisherman who don't know how to fish they are jealous of poor county anglers who do poor county people need the fish for food rich people don't
I fish a lot of blue-cat tournaments. You're on the right track but your management strategies apply to the Missouri River as well. I fished in a channel-cat tourney up in Canada on the Red River, where it had a trophy area and all fish over 24" had to be returned to the water. I caught a slew of 20 lb channels and loved every minute of it. I was a conservation agent with MDC for over 20 years and had some dealings with the length limits. It's my opinion that a slot length may well result in finding a void of fish from 34" up, as that is when those targeting blues will be keeping them. If your goal is to reach larger trophy-sized blues, then limit it to only one over 34". It's not all that common for pole-and-line fishermen to catch more than two or three per trip, but trotliners will reap the benefits of fish over 34". Let's reduce the number of hooks used by trotliners in those targeted areas. It's not uncommon to see four people in

<p>a boat fishing 132 hooks. That will result in eight trophy blues in just one day! In any event you're efforts are appreciated. Thanks from those of us that throw ALL of those monster blues back, hoping to catch him again someday.</p>
<p>We have length limits on bass and crappie and a point restriction on deer. If your studies are proving that we are taking too many fish in a given size that could hurt the species and the MDC feels we should have a slot limit to encourage larger catfish then I feel there should be a slot limit.</p>
<p>I would keep the daily limit at 5 per day and invoke the last "Slot" measurement. Regulate One fish per day over the Slot requirement.</p>
<p>I have a house in Karrs Park and have been going down there before Truman Lake was made. I fish for catfish quite often. I fish mainly on the Tebo arm from T-6 west. I have no problem catching any size fish, nor the numbers. Blue cats that is. I wonder what happened to the Flatheads? They are very few and far between. I agree with a slot limit, HOWEVER, your pound to inch ratio is very misleading to me. Just recently, I caught a blue cat that weighed 14 lbs and it's length was 26 inches. Nothing in it's stomach and very little fat. I think your (7-16) lbs for the proposed slot limit is a bit off and will confuse some people to agree as many people only weigh and not measure. That being said, I do agree that Truman lake is being over fished, over harvested and blues and flatheads are on the decline. Also, I would like to see this to help improve catfish numbers. 1.) Perhaps a season for jugging. Not trot lines, just jugs. 2.) Make the cheaply bought and poor quality noodles, wal-mart etc, illegal. You want to go jugging? Use a JUG! I personally think a true cat-fisherman takes pride in his methods, is willing to put very hard effort into it, such as a trot line and true jugs, hence eliminating the barrage of noodles floating all over the lake due to some wannabe seeing these cheap noodles at walmart and all of a sudden it is so easy to bombard the waters and catch catfish. I find way too many cheap noodles floating all over, hung up in trees, etc. I do not think the problem is with fisherman using trot lines, rod and reel or true jugs that they have spent many hours collecting, painting, rigging, labeling and finding the correct anchors for. This takes work and I want my fish AND my lines back! From now on, I will measure and weigh EVERY catfish I catch, write it down and keep that information. I hope this helps me out understanding the species growth patterns better and if slot limits do go into effect, I can see the impact. Not only for me, but for my son and daughter who are also fishing Truman Lake. I thank you for all your efforts and I have had the pleasure of talking with 2 of your agents on Truman Lake many times. They were very courteous and professional.</p>
<p>i like the new reg</p>
<p>I support regulation of the taking of big blues. We fish quite a bit on the Missouri River between Washington and St. Charles and catch primarily blues. We never take a fish over 10 lbs out of the river. We catch blues over 75 lbs more often than one might believe. It's our opinion that we are destroying the future if we take these fish out of the river. Also, the quality of the meat is not nearly as good on a large fish as it is with smaller fish. Personally, I think people taking 15 lb fish out of the rivers and lakes is detrimental. I'm in my 50's, a life long catfisherman and really want to see this resource around for my grandkids. I also agree with the ban on noodling. It is a rush (I'm from Oklahoma and have never noodled in Missouri) but it really puts a dent in the populations. Keep up the good work!</p>
<p>I would even support limiting the proposed two fish above the slot limit to one per day.</p>
<p>This is my second response.</p> <p>After re-reading the "Reservoir Blues" in this months Conservationist, go for it, put into place a slot limit on blue cats.</p>

<p>I know a guide on Truman who fishes for blue cats, he is opposed to any regulation re. a slot limit on blue cats. OK? how many guides fish for blue cats vs. the number of anglers who fish both Lake of the Ozarks and Truman? There are maybe 20 guides between these two lake who would oppose such a regulation, vs. how many thousands of anglers who would be more than happy to release a fish that falls in a slot limit knowing they are doing their part to grow bigger fish.</p> <p>We release crappie and bass under a given length, we can only shoot bucks with more than four points on one side, there are seasons on everything, in short there are regulations that have proven beyond a doubt that length limits work. This type of regulation improves our attitudes towards doing something to improve a species either by passing up a little buck or returning a short fish to the water so they can grow up.</p> <p>The MDC has done an excellent job of managing our wildlife in Missouri, keep up the good work and thanks for giving us the opportunity to participate in your surveys.</p> <p>Hoping the big rivers get help also.</p> <p>You should change it so that the young(smaller)catfish are protected up to around 25" or 30" and leave the limit at 5 catfish larger than 25" or 30". Protection of the smaller animal worked well with the deer because we are seeing alot more big buck so if you chang the catfish to protection of the smaller fish you should end up with larger fish(more meat) than smaller fish. If you increase the daily limit of smaller blues then a very small number of them will grow large enough to be in the recomended slot do to angelers being able to catch a larger amount of small less meaty fish. This may cause an over harvest of the smaller fish leaving only the larger breeding size with none to replace them.</p> <p>Leave the daily limit at 5 catfish, the slot is fine but if 10 smaller catfish are caught a day instead of 5 very few will be able to reach the slot size recomended.</p> <p>I would reduce the number of blues harvested above the slot to only ONE until numbers rebound. If this isn't supportable, then how about a limit of two with only one above 20 lbs (or some such limit). This will reduce the trophy blues harvested until the population rebounds.</p> <p>If these regulations will help mo. regain its superior fishery then i am all for it ! I also think that the area below lock and dam 13 should be considered trophy blue cat fishing with commercial fishing Banned! Everything over 15 lbs released!! We have the best blue catfishing in the world it just needs to be protected!We need to get our record back!!!!</p> <p>We're tired of all the lies and a department that doesn't care about the citizens, the wildlife, or conservation anymore.</p> <p>I have been fishing the three main river drainages and tributaries that now form LOA and Truman Reservoir since the early 1960's, long before Truman was even in existence. The catfishing on both the Osage and the Pomme was legendary by today's standard of reference. My experience with blue cats here and on the Mississippi-side of the state and near Memphis, is that they thrive in the stronger and more consistent currents of a riverine ecosystem vs. stillwaters. Your proposed regulation changes do not stipulate a time frame for the increased bag limit of 10 fish below the 26" restriction. One or two seasons maximum of the increased take capability should provide the desired thinning of the more juvenile- sized fish and bring the year classes into closer balance. Further, your proposed regulation does not seem to take into consideration the fact that we have legitimized something, in my opinion, is a risk to overharvest of numerous species which are bottom feeders, primarily, and that is jugline fishing. I cannot recount how many times in the past couple of years I have pulled into a cove or backwater area from a main channel, and found the entire cove entrance "peppered" with jug lines from a tender vessel with a pontoon boat/home base close by. Or my favorite is to be running full speed down the Osage channel toward the Pomme and suddenly find myself in the midst of a "mine field" of</p>

jugs with absolutely NO ONE within a couple of miles that could be conceivably be tending them. I have also lost track of the number of jug and trot lines I have accidentally snagged with a bass lure, only to find a dead fish on the other end. My sense is the department is NOT providing proper enforcement of the code pertaining to this method of fishing
Please put this in effect as soon as possible, then work on the same regulations on the rivers, or better yet, state wide. I would like to know when we can expect this to go into effect.
Went jugging all summer with my girlfriend out near sparrowfoot. We probably caught around 100 catfish total. 2 flatheads the rest blue cat's and out of all the blue cats only 3 weighted over 16 pounds. I prefer to keep catfish that weight more then 5-8 pounds. So when this new regulation gets passed and i go and check my 20 jugs i most likely wont get to keep any fish i catch except the 1-4 pounders which are not worth keeping and eatting. Many local family's rely on catfish from truman to help feed there familys. I havent heard anyone say that the bluecats are hard to find or that they are getting fished out. I've went out 3 times this year to go crappie fishing and everytime my girlfriend caught a bluecat within 5 mins on a bobber and minnow. The only reason i can see for the slot limit is for trophy fishing or just to get rid of all jug/troutliners and last time i checked that wasnt what the MDC is about. Those 20+ pounders aint that good of eatting either. If this does go into effect the MDC is going to make alot of hard working men break the law so they can get the fish they need to feed there family's. But atleast all the people who pole fish will have a better chance of catching bigger blues. Thanks for taking time to read my point of view. Also if my view is completly wrong, explain it on the truman lake local radio show kdkd in clinton. Many people that share my point of view listen to the outdoor program. Thanks again.
I'm not in favor of slot lengths at all. I do agree with limiting the number of jug lines per person say (6) and doing totally away with trot lines for a few years as a trail. Seams pretty simple to me, no trot lines and fewer jug lines means more fish and bigger fish.
Catfish in particular is my favorite eating fish. I fish mostly at Table rock Lake.
<p>I would like to see the above changes applied to the Mississippi, Missouri, and all other rivers and lakes that support all catfish species but of course modified to account for the size of each species. I would favor an end to all commercial fishing on the rivers. I have fished the Missouri and Mississippi Rivers for 40 years and have seen the decline. Any fish over 30lbs should be catch and release only with large fines for any fish kept over 50lbs. Fish this size are poor table fair as they are filled with carcinogens by this point with anything much over 20lbs having a foul taste anyway. I've been witness to many abuses by commercial fisherman. They keep all fish that they catch in their nets and are very difficult for fish and wildlife officers to detect and fine. Because of the wing dikes and other man made navigation enhancements I don't believe our large rivers are great habitats for fish anymore.</p> <p>I'm especially appalled about the abuses against sturgeon and paddlefish that I've witnessed below the Chain of Rocks Dam. The fish are caught stripped of roe and tossed out in the woods along the river. I've seen piles of 50 fish or more abused in this way. I believe this area is the jurisdiction of both Missouri and Illinois and I own fishing licenses for both states.</p> <p>The water quality is very poor also and not helped by the fisherman. Too often I've seen areas littered with bait boxes, bottles, cans, etc. my father and I have hauled tons of trash away left by sportsman. I would really like to see fines given to these wretches who go fishing to enjoy nature and then trash it by throwing stuff in the rivers and lakes.</p> <p>The Mississippi and Missouri Rivers should enjoy the same enforced regulations of any other pristine lake or stream in Missouri. Of course large corporations enjoy using the rivers still to dump sewage and chemicals.</p>

While I know you are sadly underfunded please do not overlook our major rivers. If these same regulations for blue, flathead, and channels were instituted fishing our rivers might be an economic boon all along the rivers and be available to more of the population than just those sportsman that fish the Truman and Ozark Reservoirs.

You may contact me to discuss what I've witnessed during the 40 plus years I've hunted for big cats in Missouri's rivers.

I think you should keep the daily limit at 5 blue catfish per day. What would the total possession number be? I think the protected slot-length should be moved down to 22-32 inches. Allow 1 blue catfish above the protected slot-length and it could be in addition to the daily limit of 5. I have fished at Truman for over 25 years and I have seen the decline in the blue catfish. We need to put some tighter regulations in place and be tougher on these people who are breaking the rules.

The laws are only good if they are enforced. There are too many jugs in the lakes. There are people putting 100 jugs in lakes fishing 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, no wonder the blue cats are disappearing.

At the the marinas at Truman Lake, the same people are cleaning 10 - 12 catfish a day everyday.

The problem with the law, after living here on Truman Lake, and fishing 4-5 days a week, I have never seen a conservation agent checking for fish.

Hi, I have students who are doing projects on the catfish slot limit at Truman. I was wondering if you could give me some information about the pro and cons on the situation, also if you could tell me about the organization that are against/ supporting the slot limit i would appreciate it.

After reading your proposed catfish regulations I found myself angry and frustrated as I feel it is an unfair analysis of the catfish population at Lake of the Ozarks and Truman Lake. I fish for catfish year round, consider myself quite good at it, and never have difficulty catching large fish. In my opinion these proposed regulations have less to do with anglers such as myself and more to do with putting money into the pockets of professional fishing guides. Believe me, there is no shortage of large catfish in the vastness of Lake of the Ozarks. There is, however, a shortage of anglers who know how to catch large fish. Your survey seems to have been given to those who are either non-catfish anglers or those who are out of touch with modern fishing techniques. In short, I'd be very disappointed in MDC for being persuaded by outside sources to change fishing regulation practices. Please consider my comments. Thank you.

I fish L of Ozarks/Truman a lot and have a home on 84 mile marker. The objective won't be met by this proposal because it won't curtail the real reason for fewer big fish which is the proliferation of both legal and illegal harvesting by trot line fishermen. I can only report on the portion of Lake of Ozarks from Truman Dam to 78 MM or so, but on that stretch, lines are almost constant and are being run multiple times a day with fish being taken home each time so possession limits aren't exceeded. A lot of this is done to supply fish for community events. I hardly ever encounter a rod/reel fisherman keeping large blues and they would be the ones punished by these new regulations. Enforcement on this narrow channel at the level necessary to stop current practice by trotliners would be very difficult but it would be possible to regulate the number or frequency of lines in the water and that is what would be necessary to reach your objective. This situation is unique to Lake of Ozarks, not Truman, because so many of us live on the water and it is easy to make the short and frequent runs to lines.

It would sure make the current proposal more palatable to legal fisherman if we thought there was

some chance the change might accomplish your objective and that could only happen by restricting the number or frequency of trot lines.
I like the new regulation but actually think you should limit it to one blue cat over 34 inches instead of 2. People will catch plenty of smaller blues so I can't imagine someone needing 2 giant ones in a single day. For me it seems a shame keeping such a large fish. Just my two cents. Good luck with the new proposed regulation.
if that's what it takes to produce big blues, then that's what it takes. Pull the trigger.
Yes I support slot limits, I just wonder how MDC will be able to enforce them. I also think that jug fishing should be more strictly regulated. Too many jugs are left unattended. This also creates boating hazards and leads to a lot of trash in our waters
I like the new limit but I would like to see those who violate the rules be hit with big fines. Rules don't mean much to a lot of people when no one monitors their activity. Thank you,
I would like to catch big blue catfish.
no 1i think the catfish guides bought you off
no 2 I don't think you are looking at the real problem if ther is one it is not us weekendersthat have a few jugs out. you need to find the locals that have 4 and 5 hidden trot lines all year . you need to limit the amout of hooks you have out and limit the amout of jugs that should make the catfish guides happy.
no 3 if you do the slot limit it will not be worth coming to the lake to fish for blues.
with the slot all we can keep are small dinks at best then there will be a battle at the ramp with you over inches and you win and cost to much surely you don't need money that bad . what you have done is taken us from 10 blues to 5 blues now we are down to2 blues the other end of the slot is not worth it
no 4 if it goes to the slot limit you win battle over a lot of us will give up fishing for blues. you sounding like politicians if it is fun you take it away or tax it so high we cannot do it